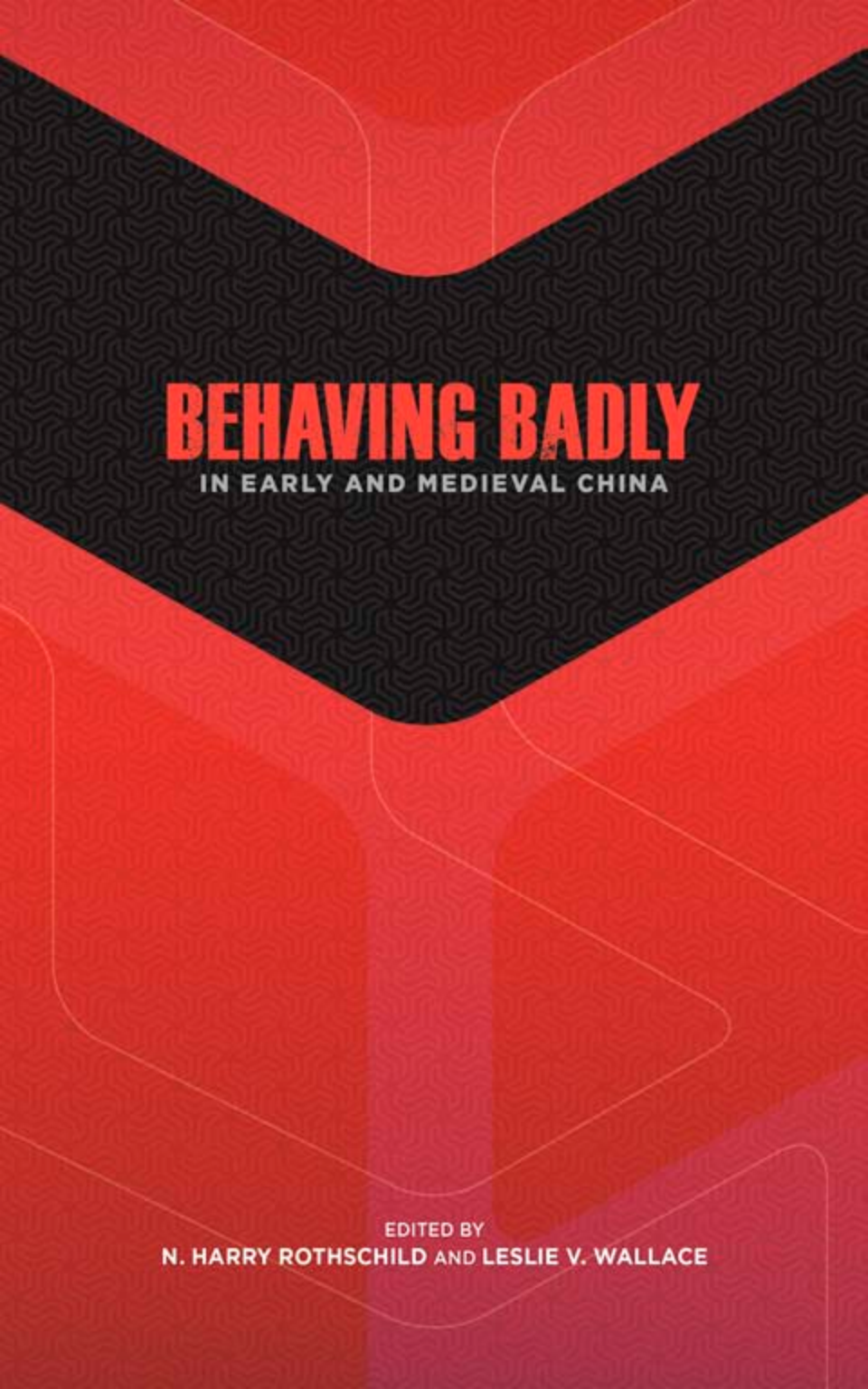


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BEHAVING BADLY

IN EARLY AND MEDIEVAL CHINA

EDITED BY
N. HARRY ROTHSCHILD AND LESLIE V. WALLACE

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AND MEDIEVAL CHINA

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Edited by N. Harry Rothschild and Leslie V. Wallace



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BEHAVING BADLY IN EARLY
AND MEDIEVAL CHINA

INTRODUCTION

N. HARRY ROTHSCILD AND LESLIE V. WALLACE

Under what conditions did man invent for himself those judgments of value, “Good” and “Evil”?

—Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

In early and medieval China, not all Confucian literati were men of principle. Not all children adhered to prescriptions of filial devotion. Not every Buddhist monk was a pillar of asceticism and piety. Not all warriors were unwaveringly righteous men of fealty. A unique interdisciplinary enterprise seeking to plumb the dark matter of the human condition, this thirteen-chapter collection of essays from a talented array of art historians, historians, and scholars of religious studies contains an impressive rogues’ gallery of treacherous regicides, impious monks, cutthroat underlings, ill-bred offspring, depraved poet-literati, devious scofflaws, and disloyal officials. Collectively, these studies examine the underlying motivations of men and women whose conduct was at egregious variance with normative social, cultural, and religious expectations.

There have been plenty of studies on Confucian morality and family values—endless ink spilled to explore every facet of *ren* 仁 (humaneness), *li* 禮 (ritual propriety or etiquette), and *yi* 義 (righteousness or appropriateness)—but few that investigate willful contraventions of those values.¹ Though many scholarly works chronicle ascetic practices and the manner in which the *vinaya*, the code that regulated Buddhist conduct, shaped monastic ethics, few have researched how and to what end Buddhist monks and nuns breached moral regulations.

Wherein resides, one might query with furrowed brow, the urgency for such a project? This collection of essays is a timely and important study precisely because the aberrant, the notorious, the profligate, and the scandalous disturb and titillate us, exerting a greater pull on the mind and heart than the righteous, the law-abiding, and the conventional. Even as we condemn these wicked behaviors, are we not all closet worshippers at the temple of excess, haunted by the imp of the perverse, susceptible to the seductive undertow of the deviant, tremulously drawn to the abject?

John Updike's provocative "Introduction" to an early 1970s collection of essays on Satanism lends an unsettling verve to the stubborn indwelling creature that we might seek to exorcise:

Is not destructiveness within us a positive lust, an active hatred? . . . Into the most ample contentment rushes, not an impulse to sing gratitude, but a frightful impatience that would . . . overthrow the tyranny of order. . . . Indeed, the more fortunate our condition, the stronger the lure of negation, of perversity, of refusal. For the more completely order would enclose us, the greater the threat to our precious creaturely freedom, which finds self-assertion in defiance and existence in sin. . . . The world always topples.²

Increasingly, when our world seethes not with madness and imminent collapse but with quotidian decency and order, we find it insufferably tedious.

Reacting against the staid, lawful rhythms of mid-America, our popular culture has a boundless appetite for deviousness, carnality, saturnalia, and decadence. Growing attention has been paid to the problematic questions of who and what defines normal and abnormal, orthodox and heterodox. Look no further than *Shameless*, *Breaking Bad*, *Weeds*, *Game of Thrones*, and *Dexter*. Our consumer appetites call for a never-ending visual buffet of drug pushers, sex addicts, incestuous royals, and serial killers. Ever attuned to these cravings, the History Channel recently released the popular series "Ancients Behaving Badly," which features Nero, Caligula, and Julius Caesar, with Genghis Khan representing Asia's sole contribution to this roll call of infamy.

In 2013, Linda Rodriguez McRobbie penned a quasi-academic study, *Princesses Behaving Badly*, that included sections on female emperor Wu Zetian (r. 690–705; who was never actually a princess) under the heading "Usurpers: Princesses Who Grabbed Power in a Man's World" and the Pingyang Princess 平陽公主 from the early Tang under "Warriors" (though, in point of fact, the Pingyang Princess did not behave badly at all).³ In the past decade or so there have been other similar works: Judith Rowbotham and Kim Stevenson, *Behaving Badly: Social Panic and Moral Outrage, Victorian and Modern Parallels* (Ashgate, 2003); Thomas Craughwell, *Saints Behaving Badly* (Random House, 2006); and Craig Monson, *Nuns Behaving Badly* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

While these studies are largely based on Western civilization, China has its own long and inglorious history of intrigue, mischief, deviance, violence, madness, excess, and sabotage. Existing outside the Confucian ambit, beyond the moral prescriptions of Chinese standard histories, distinct constituencies like the Buddhist saṃgha, wild youth eschewing classics for falconry and hunting, and a hardened often callous fraternity of military men—groups representing alternative status systems—played by their own sets of rules.

And after all, who is to objectively claim that the mettle of the vaunted Confucian hero and moral exemplar, the *junzi* 君子, is cast of finer mettle than the virtuosity of a talented austringer or the ruthless, battle-hardened career soldier? Further, one might justly (and rhetorically) ask, given the predominantly Confucian historiography in premodern China into which that same falconer is written, whether a fellow who keeps to the mews but neglects the classics has the slightest chance of favorable (or fair) representation? One of the endeavors in this collection is to tease out voices within these alternative status systems to better understand them and what they can tell us about the larger world in which they lived.

That being said, this collection is neither a wanton celebration of bad behavior nor an academic call for moral relativism.⁴ While this work does not cheerfully condone the various actions of the miscreants, the monks gone rogue, the fickle vassals, the mercurial calligraphers, the churlish offspring, and the besotted poets, advocating uncritical sympathy, it does ask the reader to seek to better apprehend the underlying behaviors of those sundry actors. Grasping the inner machinations of deviants, those whom normative values brand incorrigible reprobates, can teach us just as much about early and medieval China as oft-hagiographic research on the “sages” (lit. *sheng ren* 聖人), men like King Wen 周文王, King Wu 周武王, and the Duke of Zhou 周公, long sanctified as Confucian culture heroes.

One overarching theme resounds throughout: Behaving badly is not about morality; it is about perspective, politics, and power. In her chapter examining the motivations of Buddhist monk Sinseong, Kelly Carlton, succinctly articulating the very pith of this problematic matter, observes, “what encompassed ‘behaving badly’ in medieval China . . . was based less on the subversion of religious and societal norms and more on where one stood in an ever-vacillating political landscape.” Time and again, this collection of essays reveals that social and religious norms and rituals were not hallowed, timeless, and concrete prescriptions. Rather, these norms were plastic and mutable, often tailored to fit shifting cultural, social, and political contexts. Power relations, not principle, defined the boundaries of orthopraxy and heteropraxy.

The collection is broken into three parts, each containing four or five chapters. Part I, “Broken Ties: Compromised Social and Political Relationships,” looks at different ways in which core Confucian bonds were compromised and even severed. Filial piety was the basic building block of family; the bond between the ruler and minister was the linchpin of the Confucian state. Yet as these essays show time and again, there was often a lacuna between ideal and reality: the living did not always pay homage to the dead with a spirit of reverence, children did not honor their parents with due filiality, and subjects often pursued their own interests over those of the ruler and state.

The second part, “Orthopraxy vs. Heteropraxy: Fluidity in Ritual and Social Norms,” explores the elasticity of ritual and social norms in early and

medieval China. These norms were not universal agreed-upon truths or sacrosanct values that governed ideas of morality; rather, they were the result of debated questions of taste wherein political and/or social expedience both determined and highlighted the roles of individual actors within larger social structures and defined what was and was not deviant.

The final section, Part III, “Cultures of Bloodshed and Mayhem: Rhetoric and Reality in Confucian and Buddhist Attitudes toward Martial Violence,” features four distinctive explorations of cultural attitudes toward military action and warfare. Both an evolving Confucian sense that tended to “valorize civil and disparage the martial” (*zhongwen, qingwu* 重文輕武)⁵ and the Buddhist vinaya proscription upon killing, led literati and bhiksus alike to harshly condemn the cruelty and chaos of war. Carefully scrutinizing the underlying dynamics of politics and power, the four chapters in Part III dramatically complicate and often explode such facile good-civil/bad-martial dichotomies.

PART I

The complicated and ever-evolving set of social and political relationships in early and medieval China defined by binary sets such as elder and younger, male and female, and superior and inferior forms the core of the materials discussed in Part I. Multiple systems prescribed appropriate public and private interpersonal behaviors. The “Five Bonds,” first discussed in the writings of Mengzi 孟子 (372–289 BCE), include ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend; or the “Three Bonds” of ruler and subject, father and son, and husband and wife, which appear in the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*) and are traditionally attributed to Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE) and writings of Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), delineated prescriptions for appropriate public and private interpersonal behaviors. Although these systems varied, most stressed a strict adherence to hierarchy and unswerving respect for one’s superiors and elders. Through intricate systems of ritual propriety and decorum, existing models of interpersonal relationships created an enduring structure that bound the living and the dead into the larger social fabric and reinforced power structures. The plethora of didactic literature and commentary that valorizes moral exemplars who took their social roles and responsibilities to an extreme only serves to underscore the reality that many individuals ignored prevailing social norms, often privileging personal interest over family, community, or state.

The first two chapters focus on the extensive moralizing literature related to the concept of filial piety (*xiao* 孝), or respect for one’s parents and ancestors, the precepts of which are laid out in *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*), a text likely dating to the Warring States era. The vast majority of filial piety stories in early and medieval China concentrate on positive moral exemplars, but, as Chapters 1 and 2 show, negative exemplars could also play a powerful role in enforcing

social norms. The proliferation of stories focusing on negative role models also suggests that larger problems in the existing social fabric created a demand for such counterexamples.

In Chapter 1, “There are Maggots in My Soup! Medieval Accounts of Unfilial Children,” Keith N. Knapp focuses on accounts of children who fail to observe the proper dictates of filial piety, including delinquent sons who have no concern for the welfare and wishes of their parents and evil daughters who intentionally contaminate a mother-in-law’s food. Knapp finds that in early medieval (220–589) tales these malicious progeny are never allowed an independent existence, but instead exist solely as foils, set in juxtaposition to a good sibling who displays the proper filial devotion. Later Sui-Tang (589–907) tales, on the other hand, focus on individual unfilial children who, unlike their disobedient precursors in earlier tales, suffer divine retribution for their actions. Knapp examines the reasons for these changes and the anxieties that lay behind tales of wayward offspring whose actions violated familial and social order.

Unfilial children also figure as characters in later Song *biji* 筆記 (notebooks or miscellaneous writing), which are explored by Cong Ellen Zhang in Chapter 2, “Negative Role Models: Unfilial Stories in Song Miscellaneous Writing.” These popular stories feature examples of insolent and obnoxious children who befall the corresponding punishments, both criminal and divine. Surveying about two hundred stories of miscreant offspring, Zhang discovers that most focus on odious, unfilial sons who fail to care for even the most basic needs of their mothers, a situation that stands in contrast to the earlier tales discussed by Knapp. Although written by educated elite, she finds these tales feature offenders who belong to semiliterate and illiterate lower classes, and deploy class-based rhetoric to express fears and concerns about a society in need of urgent social reform.

As Zhang’s chapter shows, distinctions between classes were often invoked in literature focused on interpersonal relationships to differentiate social and cultural groups by their manners and decorum, or lack thereof. The *Xiaojing*, in fact, describes specific observations of filial piety based on social position. Class distinctions also greatly affected the development and observance of rules and propriety regulating relationships between men and women. Ideally women were to remain secluded in the home, their contact with men outside the family strictly limited, a seclusion only possible for elite women. This isolation within the confines of the family compound, however, neither guaranteed harmony between the sexes nor assured proper observance of related consanguine and marital propriety.

In Chapter 3, “Copulating with One’s Stepmother—Or Birth Mother?,” Paul R. Goldin looks at examples of sons who “treated their mothers like wives.” Usually such phrases indicated instances of a man taking his deceased father’s concubine, not literally his own mother. Still, the practice quickly became a literary trope for barbarism, most notably in the case of the Xiongnu 匈奴, who according to Chinese sources married their birth mother after the death of their

father. By focusing on what was considered inappropriate sexual behavior, Goldin touches not only on the complicated relationship between men and women, but also on the associated intergenerational tensions that likewise mark the stories examined by Knapp and Zhang.

Although one often doubts the stellar accounts of honorable functionaries like those highlighted in Chapter 89 of Ban Gu's "Biographies of Upright Officials 循吏傳" in the *Han Shu* 漢書, recently discovered texts provide solid evidence of very problematic bureaucratic corruption during the Han dynasty and the ways in which the bond between ruler and subject was complicated with the coming of empire. In Chapter 4, "Intransigent and Corrupt Officials in Early Imperial China," Anthony J. Barbieri-Low provides the unique perspective of actual Qin and Han cases of bureaucratic corruption and malfeasance recovered from Zhangjiashan 張家山 Tomb No. 247. Unlike the righteous ministers that appear in the standard histories, the Qin and Han officials revealed in Barbieri-Low's study betray a greater concern for their own comfort than for the public good, just as the late Warring States work the *Han Feizi* 韓非 warned.⁶ The content of the Zhangjiashan texts runs the gamut of official corruption from minor offenses, such as using convict laborers on personal projects to gross contraventions of justice, including cases of large-scale theft and murder. The bamboo slips discovered at Zhangjiashan also illuminate government attempts to rein in wayward administrators, imposing more severe punishments on officials than commoners, or prohibiting the use of official privilege to mitigate punishment in corruption cases. Barbieri-Low's examination highlights how the universal problem of bureaucratic corruption burgeoned in early imperial China, and why it was an especially pernicious issue with the foundation of empire.

PART II

The construction, destruction, and relative gravitas of orthopraxy in political, social, and ritual contexts form the core of Part II, which draws together a colorful cast of characters. Aberrant ritualists, deviant calligraphers, inebriate literati, a midriff-baring Buddhist monk, and amoral austringers all illustrate the shifting and politicized nature of what constituted propriety. As Vincent S. Leung points out in Chapter 6, the discursive nature of these value judgments is engendered by dialogic encounter between self and other, an ongoing negotiation of boundaries and prerogatives. In some cases, like that of Ying Shao 應劭's *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義, we find individuals making value judgments largely governed by taste rather than purely prescriptive rules. Others, like Zhao Yi 趙壹, who hated the increasingly popular cursive script, and the authors who condemned the frivolous pursuit of falconry, are driven by ethical and moral considerations. In the case of inebriate Song literati, the dialog is largely generated by the "deviants" themselves, with other elements in society actually encouraging their wanton

behavior. The gesture of the midriff-baring Buddhist monk, Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義, while highly offensive to Confucian contemporaries, was likely viewed very differently by Buddhists of the era or common folk, indicating that interpretations of social norms likely varied dramatically between different constituencies.

The late Han and early medieval elite are notorious for their seeming lack of ritual propriety: office-seekers sired children while still wearing mourning for their fathers; well-connected literati brayed like donkeys at the funerals of friends; and famous poets, rather than duly abstaining, reportedly reveled and drank liquor after receiving news of a parent's death. In attempting to explain these shocking lapses in ceremonial deportment, scholars have remarked upon such deviations as either transgressive expressions of individualism or signs of incomplete "Confucianization." Underlying both explanations is the common assumption that the ritual classics furnish a coherent system or systems of funerary practice, from which the educated elite drew rules and established social norms.

In Chapter 5, "Rituals without Rules: Han Dynasty Mourning Practices Revisited," Miranda Brown and Anna-Alexandra Fodde-Reguer challenge this assumption. Taking Bourdieu's critique of social rules as a point of departure, the authors examine Ying Shao 應劭's *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Discussions of Customs and Habits*), an Eastern Han exposé on the ritual misconduct of his contemporaries. Citing Ying Shao's carefully framed responses to an array of apparent ritual contraventions, the authors propose that the mourning practices of the Han elite are better understood as fluid, negotiated strategies of action than as immutable social rules. Much like fashion, these performances developed and demonstrated clear patterns; yet interestingly, such practices were not evaluated in Han times by reference to any set of explicit rules.

In traditional China, calligraphy was considered an aesthetic reflection of character. In Richard Curt Kraus's work *Brushes with Power: Modern Politics and Calligraphy*, the author remarks on the "intimate association of fine calligraphy with moral rectitude," posing the leading question, "If calligraphy reveals the inner soul of the writer, can bad people ever write good calligraphy?"⁷ In Chapter 6, "Bad Writing: Cursive Calligraphy and the Ethics of Orthography in the Eastern Han Dynasty," Vincent S. Leung examines the discursive connection between unorthodox calligraphy and moral failure. In the essay "Against Cursive Calligraphy" ("Fei caoshu" 非草書), Zhao Yi 趙壹 (fl. ca. 170s) gives us the very first, and the most polemical criticism of cursive calligraphy and its practitioners. Cursive script, Zhao contends, was a recent invention under the Qin and Han, an abbreviated form designed merely to meet the bureaucratic demands of the new empires. Yet Zhao was dumbfounded to discover that his fellow literati had elevated this vulgar shorthand into a rarefied art form to which they devoted an inordinate amount of time and attention at the expense of their proper education in the Confucian classics. Zhao maintained that the cursive script was a degraded form that lacked the meaningful structure of the

original logographs devised by the sages in antiquity, and the calligraphers were all decadent fools for indulging in this distracting, trivial pursuit.

Accusations of deviance must necessarily be founded on an imagined standard. In this particular case, Zhao Yi's relentless condemnation of cursive calligraphy and its practitioners is clearly informed by a novel set of presumed relations between the written graphs, moral cultivation, and sage teachings in the Confucian classics. Ascending the rhetorical pedestal as the arbiter of the "ethics of orthography," Zhao Yi delineates the intimate relationship between deviant script and moral failings, raining invective down upon the practitioners of cursive calligraphy, categorically depicting them as men behaving badly.

Writers in early and medieval China sometimes identified social and moral corruption in pursuits that might seem innocuous or were even distinguished in other historical contexts, as was the case with falconry in medieval Europe. In Chapter 7, "Wild Youths and Fallen Officials: Falconry and Moral Opprobrium in Early Medieval China," Leslie V. Wallace examines a group of social deviants—wild youths, debased emperors, and fallen officials, united not only by their recorded antisocial behavior and often untimely ends, but also by their love of falconry. Although other forms of excessive hunting are also maligned in textual sources, falconry in early medieval China was often singled out for particular moral scorn. Focusing on passages in which austringers are derided or condemned, Wallace argues that the majority of texts consider falconry to be a social vice associated with wild youths and other characters of dubious morals, and a practice emblematic of the general breakdown of social order. The sport is characterized as degenerate and excessive in these sources, as a hunt pursued beyond any necessary or proper role in political, social, and ritual life. Though it is never overtly discussed, there is an implication that the authors of these texts also associated falconry with alternative systems of value, and that some of the writers' disdain for falconers may stem from the sport's connection to nomadic life and/or the military class. The introduction of Buddhism and its prohibition against hunting and taking life added another dimension to the more traditional polemics that lobbied against the sport and its enthusiasts.

Perhaps because academia is notoriously populated with high-functioning alcoholics, literati drinking culture in traditional China has long been romanticized, poeticized, and prettified. As if he might raise a glass himself to join their storied company, the great scholar-translator Burton Watson exulted, "nearly all Chinese poets celebrate the joys of wine, but none so tirelessly and with such a note of genuine conviction as Li Bo."⁸ Indeed, scholars and artists alike often evoke the image of sweetly intoxicated Tang poet Li Bai (Li Bo) 李白 (701–762), perhaps gazing dreamily at the moon's reflection in a pool as he shares drinks with a host of literati friends. Raising a bowl of wine as if to offer a libation to moon goddess Chang E 嫦娥, he proclaims, "Sages and worthies from antiquity—all gone to silence; only the great drinkers have left a name

behind!”⁹ Stripping away the romanticism, providing a long-overdue and balanced vantage, Edwin Van Bibber-Orr’s sobering study, “Alcoholism and Song Literati,” looks at the personal and professional consequences of drunken excess—exposing the boorish, violent, and loutish behavior it fueled. Van Bibber-Orr goes even further: in revealing “the dark underbelly of Song bacchanalia,” he examines facets of drinking culture that have heretofore been well off academia’s radar screen; that is, the pressure of caustic contempt brought to bear against non-drinkers and the debilitating symptoms of alcoholism. As the renowned Northern Song poet Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) bitterly versified, “Guests beside me laughed at me for not drinking,” and, “Drinks are passed and I can’t leave it be / Unknowingly the moon slants and everyone is gone.” Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 (1002–1060) likewise lamented, “I want to stop drinking from now on, but fear others will mock me.”

Van Bibber-Orr’s chapter looks at Song alcoholism among literati as a culturally constructed disease: the Song dynasty imperial regime monopolized alcohol trade, generating unprecedented development in distillation and distribution. Widely available and promoted by the government, alcohol became integral to social functions such as private banquets, where household courtesans were expected to encourage drinking among the guests. The chapter investigates problems of intoxication and alcohol addiction amongst Song literati. Inebriety catalyzed transgressions, as drunken guests ran riot, destroying their hosts’ property and molesting household courtesans.

By analyzing depictions of the intense peer pressure of the Song drinking culture, its excesses and abuses, and the struggles literati faced with alcohol sickness (*jiu bing* 酒病) and abstinence, this chapter shows that Song literati used poetry to articulate personal struggles with addiction and comorbid illnesses. Ultimately, the compelling visions of a hollowed-out Mei Yaochen spitting blood and Su Shi writhing with painful hemorrhoids forces us to confront the static romanticized image of the drunken literati-poet.

The final chapter in Part II, N. Harry Rothschild’s “Flouting, Flashing, and Favoritism: An Insouciant Buddhist Monk Bares His Midriff before the Confucian Court, or Smile, You’ve been *Tanfu*’ed!” examines an incident involving the notorious Buddhist monk Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義 (d. 695) in the court of female emperor Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705). In 695 Xue Huaiyi—improbably risen from male favorite of humble origins to become a Buddhist abbot, influential ideologue, veteran general of many expeditions, and visionary architect of grand imperial ritual constructions—lay on a bench in the court hall and publicly exposed his midriff (*tanfu* 袒腹). The eccentric Xue’s wanton disregard for protocol, for the solemnity of venue, scandalized and profoundly outraged the Confucian court. To better grasp the intent and implications of Xue Huaiyi’s bared midriff, this chapter explores different historical and ideological aspects underlying the eccentric and unorthodox monk’s offense-giving gesture: Buddhist, Confucian, folk/popular, and etymological.

PART III

Worlds scarred by political and social violence form the backdrop to the final four chapters in this volume. The first two chapters in Part III investigate the behavior of individuals or groups in both the *wen* (文 civil) and *wu* (武 military) traditions who strayed from a prescribed path of duty, virtue, upright principle, and proper ritual behavior in the bloodthirsty worlds of the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE) and Five Dynasties period (907–960 CE). The vaunted conception of *wen*—the Confucian literati’s refinement, civility, and edification purportedly modeled upon the flawless deportment of sage-rulers of antiquity—provided a moral template for all to emulate. Lord Guan, Guan Yu 關羽 (d. 220 CE), the celebrated late Eastern Han general who was later deified, came to embody a complementary *wu* tradition of martial prowess, discipline, loyalty, valor, and restraint.¹⁰ But as these chapters show, there is always a gap between cultural ideals and realities and those in positions of power often choose to ignore such dictates, often to their own peril and the peril of those around them.

The final two chapters in Part III investigate the complicated intersection between politics and Buddhism, focusing on two “evil” monks who served as generals/military advisors in the early Tang dynasty, the pivotal historical juncture when China emerged as what Tansen Sen terms a “Central Buddhist Realm.”¹¹ And while the quintessential Buddhist image of the pure lotus rising from the worldly quagmire of filth, muck, and corruption was compelling, not all the Buddhist faithful proved capable of escaping the seductive marsh of lust, power, wealth, and earthly entanglements. From an early juncture in Chinese Buddhism, the Buddhist *saṃgha*, the monastic order, contained codes prescribing monastic conduct: a monk should not be unchaste, not steal, not kill, and must eschew adornment, ostentation, and wealth. However, one of the best ways for an eminent Buddhist monk to propagate his faith in medieval China was to secure the sponsorship and patronage of the emperor, a proposition that came with temptations and contradictions for a devout Buddhist. As we see in the final two chapters, bhiksus playing martial roles were branded with the epithet “evil monk,” not for violating one of the basic precepts in Buddhism, but for running afoul of victorious powerbrokers in the complex religiopolitical world they sought to navigate.

In Chapter 10, “Running Amok in Early Chinese Narrative,” Eric Henry examines the social conditions of elite life during the sixth century BCE in the state of Lu, providing a chilling vision of the context in which the earliest Confucians developed the lofty concept of *li*. Henry finds that the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 (*The Zuo Commentary*) and *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the States*) present a dark, base world filled with dread and apprehension. Although noblemen speak of moral stature and practical attainments, the personal lives of the Lu elite were far from uplifting. Terror reigned in a bloody and volatile environment, an

anxiety-fraught world of pervasive despair where lofty principles were routinely cast aside and historical actors committed a litany of indefensible acts. Henry's chapter draws attention to the violent and corrupt world that was the crucible of early Confucian thought, bringing a different perspective to the urgency with which men sought to craft an ethical code that might begin to order the sun-dared realm.

Dating back to the reputed writings of Sunzi 孫子, the legendary late sixth century BCE general, strategist, and philosopher, there existed martial codes of ethics and embedded cultural ideas of good generalship. In times of chaos, however, men did not scrupulously abide by these rules. In Chapter 11, "Wolves Shepherding the People: Cruelty and Violence in the Five Dynasties," Hongjie Wang looks at the widespread brutality and rapacity in tenth-century China. Wang's chapter is set amid the tumultuous Five Dynasties era (907–960), an age plagued by rapidly rising and falling regimes ruled by greedy, malicious, lecherous, self-indulgent, and bloodthirsty military men. Through an examination of the evil deeds perpetrated by military monarchs and their generals, this chapter attempts to explain the epidemic savagery of the era. These were not principled men of martial valor cut from the same cloth as worthies like Sunzi or Guan Yu. Intense political strife, an overemphasis on martial values, and tensions between the military and the civil elite all contributed to the turbulent violence and cruelty. More significantly, the unending wars and swift changes in political rule created an environment where contempt for human life became commonplace, particularly among those who should have been upholding martial values.

Faya 法雅 (?–629), the primary subject in Jinhua Chen's chapter, "A 'Villain-Monk' Brought Down by a Villein-General: A Forgotten Page in Tang Monastic Warfare and State-Samgha Relations," had gained a reputation for martial prowess when he helped founding Tang emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618–626) consolidate the nascent dynasty. In a subsequent Tang campaign against the Turks, however, Faya's efforts to recruit a formidable army of Buddhist monks alarmed rival Buddhist factions and generals alike. Furthermore, after Gaozu's son Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649) forcefully seized the throne in 626, Faya failed to secure the new emperor's patronage and support. Shortly, amid a maelstrom of suspicion, Faya was executed on the ground of treason.

Sources disparage Faya as an "evil monk" (*yaoseng* 妖僧) or "wicked monk" (*eseng* 惡僧) in large part because his involvement in the brutality of military campaigns defied a fundamental precept of Buddhism. Chen illustrates how despite this Buddhist "scriptural ban on violence," the Buddhist community in medieval China was not infrequently "implicated in military and violent activities." Pawing through dense and overlapping layers of Confucian and Buddhist sources, Chen complicates the "evil monk" label, arguing that other eminent monks from the mainstream samgha played roles not dissimilar to that of Faya. Faya's alleged wrongdoing, it turns out, was more the product of being outflanked

by other influential Buddhist monks and giving offense to powerful generals and courtiers than to any particular heretical behavior.

Kelly Carlton's chapter, "Martial Monks without Borders: Was Sinseong a Traitor or Did He Open the Gate to a Pan-Asian Buddhist Realm?" examines the extraordinary conduct of Sinseong (Chinese: Xincheng 信誠), a Goguryean monk-general who opened the gate to Pyöngyang and surrendered the city to invading Tang armies in 668. As Chen's examination of Faya capably delineates, records of the Buddhist saṃgha in medieval China exhibit a significant dichotomy between Buddhism's theoretical admonitions against violence and the reality of monks' frequent participation in martial affairs. The extent to which a monk was denounced as "false" or "villainous" (*jian* 奸) is complicated by the saṃgha's intertwined political and economic relationship with the Tang court.

By what historical yardstick, then, are we to judge Buddhist monk-general Sinseong, whose decision to let an autonomous Korean state that had endured for better than six centuries fall to Tang China? Clearly, his conduct, motivations, and character cannot be calibrated in terms of his adherence to or deviation from the Buddhist vinaya; nor can we simply use the Confucian notion of loyalty (*zhong* 忠) to gauge (and find wanting) his mettle as Goguryean vassal-subject. Ultimately, as Carlton deftly illustrates, Sinseong was engaged not in an act of treachery or sabotage, but in a larger effort to remove impediments and usher in what Carlton calls a "supranational Buddhist community," a pan-Asian religious continuum without borders.

As sociologists have long since pointed out, deviance—the violation or contravention of norms—is socially and culturally constructed.¹² Therefore, as Nachman Ben-Yehuda frames it, deviance—the entire vast galaxy of transgressions and bad behaviors—and reactions to it must necessarily be viewed as part of a "wider societal cultural mosaic" in which multiple overlapping "symbolic-moral universes" are engaged in a complex series of "negotiations about the nature of morality and the use and legitimation of power."¹³

Apprehending deviance thus requires more than an examination of the criminal, abnormal, and transgressive behaviors of outsiders; since these "deviants" are part of a larger social organism, it necessitates what sociologist Howard Becker once termed an "interactionist approach." Such an investigation turns the mirror on those who make the rules, those possessing the power and authority to make laws and define normative values. Scholars must treat definitions and judgments of deviance framed by "respectable people and constituted authority" as raw data for analysis rather than universal "statements of unquestioned moral truths."¹⁴ Without this critical evaluation, social and political powerbrokers in every era generate a permanent, static narrative that defines the deviant and the normal in what Edwin Schur cleverly terms "an insidious process of retrospective interpretation through which other people 're-read' the character of the perceived deviant."¹⁵

Schur asserts that “Deviance issues are inherently political” and that “deviance outcomes . . . both reflect and determine configurations of power.”¹⁶ C. Mills Wright further articulates what is at stake when the master narrative stands unchallenged, arguing that the corporate-capitalist “power elite” engaged in a “higher immorality,” can then wield their wealth and privilege as a blunt legal and political instrument to sustain their position by suppressing dissenting (deviant) voices.¹⁷

While their work largely focuses upon the seismically tumultuous and transformative 1960s in the United States—Schur examines the “deviantizing process” behind labels of mental illness and efforts to discredit protest movements, while Wright seeks to expose the systemic evils of the military-industrial complex—might not their incisive sociological lens profitably be turned upon the “power elite” of traditional China? Indeed, a study of the atypical and nefarious can often reveal much about those who point the finger of condemnation at violators of political, social, or cultural values and norms. Such an approach bears many fruits in this volume. In some cases, such as Eric Henry’s chapter focused on the Spring and Autumn period elite, it highlights the dissonance between real practices and perceived ideals in elite life. Other chapters, such as Cong Ellen Zhang’s investigation of Song tales of unfilial commoners, suggest that it was precisely the “power elite” who most egregiously transgressed the vaunted precepts of filiality.

Individual chapters in this volume consistently complicate and problematize facile conceptions of transgression and deviance in early and medieval China. There was no monolithic Confucian establishment dictating timeless and immutable moral truths. Unfilial offspring, wanton officials, and marauding monks often disregarded Confucian and Buddhist imperatives. Motivated by alternative systems of value, and often acting in response to the less than perfect worlds in which they lived, the perpetrators in the following chapters chose to engage in aberrant and immoral behaviors, flouting, defying, or rearticulating normative boundaries. Within the Confucian matrix, there were multiple contested and negotiated moralities. Stakes were high. Whether through performances of filial piety or mourning, the social etiquette of literati banquets, or calligraphy techniques, the subjects of these studies are engaged in vital struggles for the authority and prestige accrued with the coveted ground of orthopraxy. Beyond the ambit of Confucian morality, this collection reveals a vast, curious world rife with a colorful panoply of subcultures and cutthroat violence, ranging from sybaritic falconers and daydreaming poets to murderous kinsmen and bumptious Buddhist monks.

What can these not-so-upright exemplars teach us about early and medieval China that we do not already know? Standard Chinese histories generally seek to retrofit the complex jumble of the past into a neater series of Confucian parables that establish dichotomies of upright and corrupt, of appropriate and inappropriate, of good and evil, of right and wrong, of orthodox and heterodox.

By focusing on the actions, gestures, and behaviors of the demonized and ostracized, this collection of essays decenters and complicates this narrative, thereby shedding light on different social and historical epiphenomena we may miss when we stick to the official story.

NOTES

Epigraph. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (Mineola, NY: Dover Books, 2003).

1. Many of the essays in this collection examine behaviors deemed bad or deviant from the dominant sociocultural vantage of Confucianism. It is, of course, impossible in a footnote to address the complexity or history of the development of Confucianism, nor to explain exactly when and how different elements of it became a codified ethical and ideological system impacting most aspects of elite life. Still, some initial explanation of the term “Confucian” in this collection is necessary. Based on the teachings of the Eastern Zhou sage Confucius (551–479 BCE), Confucian thought was an ethical and ideological system that reinforced, in state and family and in politics and society, the normative authority and rectitude of hierarchy. This vision is reflected in the five Confucian relationships (*wu lun* 五倫): the minister shall be unswervingly loyal to the ruler; the son shall be duly filial to the father; the younger brother shall embrace the elder with fraternal spirit; the wife shall submit to and obey the husband; and friends shall treat one another with reciprocal kindness. A matrix of principles central to mature Confucianism also developed—including filial piety (*xiao* 孝), righteousness, benevolence, ritual propriety, knowledge (*zhi* 知), and love of learning (*xue* 學).

2. Updike, *Picked up Pieces*, 84. Originally from Updike’s “Introduction” to the collection of essays edited by F. J. Sheed, *Soundings in Satanism* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1972).

3. McRobbie, *Princesses Behaving Badly*.

4. In *Foundations of Moral Relativism*, J. David Velleman contends that moral relativism is essentially founded upon two observations. The first is that different communities and individuals have “mutually incompatible moral norms”; the second that “no single set of norms among one people is universally valid.” One of his larger points is that “local mores” sometimes supersede larger ethical systems. These “local mores” are akin to the above-mentioned “alternative status systems.”

5. Though the phrase *zhongwen*, *qingwu* likely comes from the Southern Song or even early Ming, it can be aptly applied to earlier cultural attitudes (especially Song) toward the relative merits of the civil and martial spheres.

6. Han, “The Five Vermin,” 199–203. For a nuanced critique, see Hutton, “Han Feizi’s Criticism of Confucianism and Its Implications for Virtue Ethics.”

7. Kraus, *Brushes and Power*, 45.

8. Watson, *Chinese Lyricism*, 143.

9. Li Po, “Bring the Wine!” in Watson, *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry*, 208.

10. Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*. In his dyadic construction of Chinese masculinity, Louie takes Confucius as the “*wen* god” of civil attainment and Guan Yu as the “*wu* icon” of martial valor.

11. The second chapter of Tansen Sen’s *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003),

55–101, is titled “The Emergence of China as a Central Buddhist Realm.” Many other scholars like Antonino Forte, Kenneth Chen, and Arthur Wright have also noted that the early Tang marked the heyday of Chinese Buddhism.

12. For more on the notion of deviance as a social and cultural construct, see Ben-Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance*, and Heiner, *Deviance across Cultures*. Ben-Yehuda contends that “deviance is almost eternally socially negotiated and culturally constructed” (255). Similarly, in *Outsiders*, Howard Becker bluntly asserts that deviance “is created by society,” that “social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders” (8–9).

In his “Rules for the Distinction of the Normal from the Pathological,” in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Emile Durkheim affirms that the “pathological” (i.e., the deviant) brings into clearer resolution and reconfirms the moral boundaries of the “normal” (50–67). Also see Durkheim, *The Division of Labor and Society*, 70–110.

13. Ben-Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance*, 3 and 253.

14. Becker, *Outsiders*, 206–208. In *The Politics and Morality of Deviance*, Ben-Yehuda makes a similar claim, arguing that any study of deviance “must consider total social structures and/or processes,” situating the purported transgressive behavior “as part of larger processes of change and stability in the realm of symbolic-moral universes and their boundaries,” 5.

15. Schur, *The Politics of Deviance*, ix and 7.

16. *Ibid.*, 13.

17. See C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

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PART I

Broken Ties

Compromised Social and Political Relationships

THERE ARE MAGGOTS IN MY SOUP!

Medieval Accounts of Unfilial Children

KEITH N. KNAPP

Throughout premodern East Asia, one means by which the value of *xiao* 孝 (filial piety) was taught was through narratives about unfilial children. This type of tale was so fashionable that the popular Tokugawa Japanese novelist Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1694) penned a work called *Honchō nijū fukō* 本朝二十不孝 (*Our Dynasty's Twenty Unfilial Children*). Ihara quipped that his book was to have twenty-four unfilial sons, in the fashion of the famous Chinese work *Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝 (*The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars*), but in Japan he could only find twenty.¹ How far back does this tradition of propagating tales about unfilial children extend? What were the characteristics of the earliest tales about unfilial children? Exactly what did the authors of these narratives deem as unfilial? How far back does the tradition of unfilial children being struck by lightning bolts extend? The answers to these questions will disclose much about medieval conceptions of filiality, proper behavior, and domestic fears.

Narratives about filial sons and daughters first became abundant in early medieval times (220–589).² Strikingly though, of the over three hundred early medieval accounts of this type, not even one solely features an unfilial son or daughter. This chapter will begin by showing that in early medieval accounts negative exemplars are never allowed an independent existence—they are always included in a larger tale about a filial son. I will then discuss the unfilial acts that are specifically associated with men and women and how they change from the early medieval to the Sui-Tang (589–907) period. I contend that there are two discernible shifts between the early medieval and Sui-Tang tales of unfiliality: the latter narratives (1) focus exclusively on unfilial sons and daughters-in-law and (2) have the spirit world rather than filial sons punish the unfilial. This shift is probably due to Daoist notions that heavenly spirits would reduce the life span of the unfilial and the influence of popular Chinese Buddhism that stressed the heavy price to be paid for karmic transgressions.

LACK OF UNFILIAL EXEMPLARS

The early medieval period witnessed an unprecedented increase in tales about filial sons and daughters. Often these narratives were found in privately compiled volumes called *Xiaozi zhuan* 孝子傳 (*Accounts of Filial Children*). Likewise, in the period's dynastic histories there are group biographies dedicated to filial children; indicative of their importance, chapters on filial exemplars are usually placed at the head of the group biographies. This was indeed the golden age of filial piety narratives—never again would the upper class hold these stories in such high esteem.³

Despite the voluminous number of individual filial piety tales, one is hard pressed to find even one early medieval narrative that exclusively features an unfilial child.⁴ Every time a disobedient brat appears, there is always a filial son who counters his or her errant ways. In other words, anecdotes about unfilial children are always enclosed in a larger narrative about an exemplary son. It is as though authors found it necessary to put forward a filial child to contain the damage caused by an unfilial one. The seventh-century *Nanshi* 南史 (*History of the Southern Dynasties*) biography of Xiao Ruiming 蕭勰明 aptly illustrates this point. It begins with an anecdote that describes how, when his mother was in the grips of an illness for years, the filial Ruiming would unceasingly kowtow while praying for a cure. When winter came, his tears and the blood on his forehead from kowtowing froze on his face. Suddenly a person appeared who gave him a small box. Inside was a three-inch piece of raw silk with the characters for sun and moon written on it in cinnabar. His mother ingested the silk and was instantly cured.

The next anecdote within Xiao Ruiming's biography speaks of another man, Zhu Xu 朱緒, whose mother was also sick for many years. One day, she suddenly desired to eat a stew made of aquatic grasses (*jiaobai* 茭白). After tasting the medicinal soup, Zhu liked it so much that he gobbled it up. His mother reprimanded him saying, "Due to my illness, I desired to have this stew. How could you have the heart to eat it completely? If Heaven has awareness, it should cause you to choke to death."⁵ His heart quickly became heavy, and he started to lose blood. The next day he was dead. The author then relates:

When Ruiming heard of this incident, he was overcome with tremendous grief and refused to eat for many days. He made inquiries about the location of Xu's corpse; he desired to personally destroy it. Not long afterwards, though, he said, "[To desecrate that corpse] would pollute my knife," so he desisted.⁶

It is obvious here that Zhu Xu is merely a foil to Ruiming: both men are faced with a mother that has been ill for many years. Whereas Ruiming entirely devotes himself to praying on her behalf, Zhu Xu selfishly only thinks about his

own wants. Zhu Xu's act is particularly odious because a common trope of filial piety tales is that a filial son will do anything, including endangering his own life, to procure whatever his parent desires. Thus, Zhu Xu's abhorrent behavior throws into stark relief Ruiming's own exemplary conduct. The unfilial child is merely a bit player in a spectacle that celebrates the filial son's actions. Almost all of the early medieval tales of unfilial children share this structure.

THE UNFILIAL WANG QI

One of the most notorious early medieval unfilial sons appears in the story of Dong An 董黯. This account originated in Yu Yu's 虞預 (fl. 320) *Guji dianlu* 會稽典錄. A fragment of this text tells us that,

His family was poor so he collected firewood to reverently care for his mother. Upon obtaining a sweet fruit he would rush home to proffer it to her. She was extremely plump and pleased. The neighbor's household was rich. It had a son who was unfilial; as a result, his mother was extremely skinny. The unfilial son hated that Dong's mother was fat. He frequently tormented and insulted her. Dong did not take revenge on him. When his mother died and he had carried the dirt to form her tumulus, birds and beasts helped him in grieving for his lost one. As expected, he killed the unfilial son and placed [his body] as a sacrificial offering in front of his mother's tomb. He tied himself up and went to the district yamen. When there was an amnesty he was released.⁷

One of the most interesting facts about this early account is that the unfilial son is so inconsequential that he is not even named. This version's central focus is the filial way in which Dong takes revenge. Even though his blood was boiling when his neighbor abused Dong's mother, he refrained from doing anything; instead, he concentrated on taking care of her. It was only after her death, when she no longer needed care, that he murdered his unfilial neighbor—a crime that could result in Dong An's execution. In a way, the unfilial son does not need to be named because he merely sets the stage for the filial son's heroic act. The story's message is not that one should avoid being unfilial, but rather that a filial son must restrain himself. He can only take revenge for his parents after his obligation to provide them with care has ended.

Fifth and sixth century versions of the Dong An narrative have a different focus. These later versions come from fragments of a popular encyclopedia discovered at Dunhuang 敦煌 and two fully extant *Xiaozi zhuan* that have been preserved in manuscript form in Kyoto. Based on pictorial evidence, the Japanese scholar Kuroda Akira 黒田彰 posits that one of these manuscripts dates to the late fifth century.⁸ These later versions give a much more elaborate rendering of some parts of the story and also contain a much greater emphasis on defining

what constitutes unfilial behavior. Most notably all of these versions name the unfilial son (Wang Qi 王奇 or Wang Ji 王寄); and in each version he plays a substantial role in the narrative. A crucial addition to the text is a conversation between Dong An's mother and Wang Qi's that serves to define filial behavior. Wang Qi's mother remarks,

"Your years surpass seventy and your family is poor, yet surprisingly, your expression is joyful like this, how can that be?" Dong An's mother replied, "It is only because, even though we are poor to the extent that I cannot eat meat stew and my clothes are thin, there is no friction between us and he has never caused me to worry." Wang Qi's mother said, "Although my family is rich to the extent that we eat fish and those foods that I love, my son is unfilial, and together with other people he does frightening things. It is only because I am afraid he will be ensnared in their crimes that I am skinny and emaciated."⁹

From this conversation we learn true filiality lies not in the things that a parent is given to eat, but in a son never causing his parent anxiety. Since Dong An puts his mother at ease through his behavior, even though he is only able to furnish simple fare, she is able to enjoy every morsel, whereas Wang Qi's mother is always so anxious she can never enjoy a meal, no matter how rich her food.

Fifth and sixth century versions of the Dong An tale depict in even greater detail Wang Qi's atrocious behavior. The *Leilin* 類林 (*Forest of Categories*) version of the tale furnishes a much more graphic account of how Wang Qi tormented Dong An's mother:¹⁰ "He [Wang Qi] waited until Dong An was not present and entered into his home. He grabbed Dong's mother and threw her below the bed. His hands slapped her; his feet tread upon her. Only after putting her through hardships and insulting her did he leave."¹¹ The *Yōmei bunko Kōshiden* 陽明文庫孝子伝 (*Yōmei Library's Xiaozhi zhuan*) relates that Wang Qi was so desperate to fatten his mother that,

In the morning after getting up, he selected a fat cow and slaughtered it. He would take ten *jin* 斤 (catties) of excellent meat and a peck of superior rice, cook them, and then present them to his mother. In the middle of the day, he slaughtered a fat sheep. [Taking] ten *jin* of excellent meat and a peck of superior rice, he cooked and presented them to his mother. In the evening, he would slaughter a fat pig. [Taking] ten *jin* of excellent meat and a peck of superior rice, he cooked and presented them to his mother. He would then say to her, "Eat this completely! If you do not, I will put a sword through your heart and use a halberd to hook your head." After hearing these words, his mother could not bear to eat: she pushed the dishes away and threw them on the ground. Therefore, the *Classic of Filial*

Piety 孝經 states, “Even though you use the three sacrificial animals to nurture [your parents], this still is not filiality.”¹²

According to this version, not only did Wang Qi abuse Dong An’s mother, he even physically threatened his own mother. In short, Wang Qi only selfishly thinks of his own desires rather than those of his mother. He provides her with food, but not with respect; as Confucius noted, he thereby treats her no differently than dogs or horses.¹³ No wonder she was skinny!

Clearly, the motif of unfiliality was much more prominent in versions of the tale from the late fifth and early sixth century. The unfilial son not only is named, but the entire account focuses on his actions and their ill consequences. Wang Qi is portrayed as so abhorrent that the reader feels satisfaction when Dong An kills him. The late fifth century or sixth century versions of the tale of Dong An were so popular that in the Northern Wei (386–535) illustrations of them were carved onto stone funerary equipment. A funerary shrine in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts that dates to 527 has an image of both mothers sitting in adjoining rooms conversing with each other. Its accompanying inscription reads, “This is the moment when Dong An’s mother was speaking with Wang Ji’s mother.” On the right side of the image, we see a standing Dong An waiting on his mother who is seated within the open-sided room. On the left side, we see Wang Qi’s mother who is also seated enclosed within a room; she faces Dong An’s mother and is attended upon by a servant girl standing in the room and her son outside of it looking in.¹⁴ This scene and its accompanying inscription are obviously based on the fifth and sixth century versions of the tale that highlights the conversation between the mothers.

An engraving of the Dong An tale on a Northern Qi (550–577) stone funerary bed preserved at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art further confirms the popularity of the fifth and sixth century versions of the story. One of the stone panes has an image of a man standing before a mature woman who is sitting in a room. She holds a cane with which she is poking items that are on a large dish in front of her. Standing outside the room, looking at the woman, is a man armed with a long sword. An inscription in the upper right corner reads, “The Unfilial Wang Ji.”¹⁵ This image appears to capture the moment in the story in which Wang Qi’s mother rejects the food her son is forcing her to eat. Kuroda thinks that the two sections of the screen that surround this one also narrate the story of Dong An. He suggests that the panel to the left shows a kneeling Dong An serving his seated elderly mother, while the panel to the right shows Dong An paying his respects to a tomb—undoubtedly that of his mother.¹⁶ There is a keen contrast between the two scenes of each son with his mother. On the left, a man respectfully kneels before an aged woman, gazing at her peaceful countenance. In the image of the unfilial Wang Qi, he is standing rather than respectfully kneeling; his mother’s countenance is tense. If Kuroda is correct that the two

flanking scenes depict Dong An, then the image of the unfilial son is literally embedded in a pictorial narrative of a filial son.

Obviously, the patrons and viewers of the Northern Dynasties' images of the Dong An tale were interested in Wang Qi's unfiliality, which is why one image features the conversation between the two mothers, while in another the unfilial son himself is portrayed. Nevertheless, even within fifth or sixth century versions of the tale, the unfilial son merely serves as a foil for the filial Dong An. Indeed, if Kuroda's contentions are correct, then each artifact alludes to Wang Qi's dastardly acts while simultaneously highlighting Dong An's filiality.

YUAN GU'S UNFILIAL FATHER

An even more popular tale that features an unfilial son is that of the filial grandson, Yuan Gu 原谷 or 原穀. The *Yōmei bunko kōshiden* manuscript relates that,

[Yuan Gu] was perfectly filial. His father, however, was extremely unfilial. Because of this he hated his father [Yuan Gu's grandfather]. He had Yuan Gu make a litter. They took the grandfather into the mountains [and abandoned him there]. Yuan Gu again brought the litter back with him. Greatly incensed, his father said, "For what reason have you brought back this foul item?" Yuan Gu answered, "When you, father, later become old, I will once again need it to abandon you. There will be no need to make it anew." His stupid and stubborn father regretted the mistake he had made. Once again he went into the mountains, where he welcomed his father back and all of them returned home. Each morning and evening [Yuan Gu's father] would filially care for him. There was no resentment between the family's superiors and inferiors.¹⁷

This account directly tells us that Yuan Gu's father is unfilial and that he even loathed his father. He then forced Yuan Gu to help him abandon his grandfather. Whereas the Dong An tale is about filial restraint and revenge, the Yuan Gu narrative is about remonstrance: Yuan Gu is able to reform his unfilial father's ways by reminding him of the reciprocity that underlies the parent-child relationship. Through remonstrance, the filial grandson transforms his errant father into a filial son.

A quick glance at Eastern Han (25–220) and Northern Dynasties' artifacts and tombs confirms that this tale was exceptionally popular. Except for the Ding Lan 丁蘭 tale, no other filial piety story was depicted as frequently.¹⁸ No matter whether they are from the Eastern Han, Northern Dynasties, or the Song-Yuan period, illustrations of this narrative display a remarkable uniformity and stability: if depicted in one scene, an elderly and pathetic looking man sits on the ground while an adult male walks away. Holding a litter, a boy

or young man engages the adult male who is walking away in a dramatic conversation. The young man, of course, is the filial Yuan Gu who is remonstrating with his father. This tale's long-lasting popularity and the constancy with which it is depicted underscores its significance to Chinese audiences. These images emphasize the father's lack of filiality by depicting the precise moment when he abandons his father. Artisans magnified the cruelty of the act by portraying the grandfather as decrepit and helpless. Inscriptions accompanying Northern Wei portrayals of this tale also emphasize the son's noxious actions. A stone coffin in the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts states, "The filial grandson[s father] abandons his father in the deep woods." A stone screen of a funerary bed portrays the tale in two scenes: the cartouche of one reads, "The father of the filial grandson is unfilial."¹⁹

Since the tales of Dong An and Yuan Gu both frequently appear in Northern Dynasties funerary iconography, it becomes clear that pictorially stories that featured unfilial children being restrained by the acts of filial sons were quite significant. My assumption is that narratives that were illustrated pictorially were the most popular ones—these tales were so well-known by the Northern Wei that the artisans merely had to identify which filial child was being portrayed for their audience to identify the story. Hence, even though the number of early medieval stories about unfilial children were small in number, narratives about filial sons who countered unfilial ones assumed a prominent place in early medieval iconography.

An important point to keep in mind in both of these tales is that the unfilial sons' acts were addressed by their filial counterparts, rather than a supernatural agent. Wang Qi causes chaos by making his own mother worry and by bullying Dong An's mother. Dong An restores good social order by killing this miscreant. That this was indeed the way some contemporaries interpreted this tale is evident in the last part of the *Yōmei bunko kōshiden*'s version. After being arrested and tied up for killing Wang Qi, Dong An pleads to be taken to his mother's grave. There he reported to his mother that he had killed her enemy and was ready to die. The text then reads,

He then gave vent to his feelings and cried. Blood came out of his eyes. Flying birds [were so numerous that they] blocked the sunlight; birds and beasts cried out in grief; some landed on his shoulder, some landed on his head. The inspector noted all these occurrences and memorialized the king. Upon hearing it, the king sighed and said, "I would like to respectfully thank the filial son Dong An. Although lacking virtue, we must carry out a myriad of duties. Now We have an evildoer that has rebelled against us and he should be done away with. I have caused and belabored this filial child to help us remove this blight." He thereupon bestowed upon Dong An a hundred *jin* of gold to augment his filial reputation.²⁰

The king explicitly states that Dong An has helped the state by eliminating an evildoer. Rather than punish him, he rewards him with gold. We do see a supernatural response in the behavior of birds and beasts who deeply sympathize with Dong An. However, this comes in reaction to Dong An's grief—it has nothing to do with Wang Qi's horrible acts. In the story of Yuan Gu, there are no supernatural elements at all. Yuan Gu restores order to the rules of the social world by changing his father's behavior through remonstrance.

TALES OF UNFILIAL SONS IN THE SUI AND TANG DYNASTIES

Sui-Tang (581–907) narratives that concern unfilial sons differ from their early medieval counterparts in two respects: (1) an unfilial son appears as the main protagonist; there is no filial son to cancel out his negative actions, and (2) supernatural agents, rather than filial sons, restore order by punishing the son's evil deeds.

What is undoubtedly a Buddhist text entitled the *Guixin lu* 歸心錄 (*Records of Returning to the Heart-mind*), which is quoted in Daoshi's 道世 (d. 683) Buddhist encyclopedia, the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*Forest of Gems in the Garden of Dharma*), furnishes two narratives about unfilial sons.²¹ The first tale concerns a Zhou 周 dynasty man named Wang Yanwei 王彥偉:

By nature he was ferocious and fond of hunting. Being their only child his parents pitied and loved him very much. Each time they would remonstrate with him and disallow him from befriending evil people. They would also disapprove of him hunting with a bow and arrow because they feared he might harm his body; he would be unable to continue the patri-line. Wei would not listen to his parents' admonitions; he would hunt incessantly. At the same time, he would have dealings with evildoers. When his parents realized he would not desist in his evil ways, they caned him fifty times. His body was covered with sores, so he could not go out. For this reason he hated his parents. He waited until nighttime when they were asleep. He secretly took a sack filled with dirt and pressed it into his parents' mouths. He placed his body on top of theirs and watched to see if their breath would stop. He hoped to send them onto death without their having any wounds. When they were about to expire, he was unable to guess what would happen to himself. Suddenly he saw a ghost enter the main hall who jolted the whole household awake. Everyone large and small discovered that Wei was in front of his parents' bed. He thereupon laid flat on his back. The sack of dirt was already on his stomach. His parents awoke. They tried to pull the sack of dirt off their son, but it would not leave his body. Wei could see that the ghost was pressing the sack from above. He was experiencing extreme hardship and was dying. The parents called for help. The whole household and their neighbors all

worked to remove the sack, but in the end they could not budge it. Wei could not emit a sound; he merely used his hand to simulate kow-towing. He pressed his hands together and died.²²

Wang commits unfilial acts on three different levels. The most basic one is that he associates with the wrong people and engages in a dangerous pastime, hunting, which could cause him physical injury and even impair his ability to have children. His second level offence is that he does not listen to his parents when they ask him to desist. His third level offence occurs after his parents rightly punish him he holds a grudge and tries to kill them. Although the first two levels of unfiliality are bad enough, the third level is inexcusable, which is why the ghost intervenes. In this dramatic narrative no filial son emerges to restore order. No human knew of the dastardly deed that Wang was committing. However, the spirit world could not sit idly by and watch Wang commit patricide.

The second tale is even more beyond the pale. He Junping 何君平 was an only son who was spoiled beyond measure. His parents loved him too much and did not sufficiently educate him; consequently, he was uncontrollable. Even when he was twenty, his parents loved him so much they would not allow him to live separately from them. His father was called away for a number of years. Taking pity on Junping, the mother began to sleep with him.²³ When the father returned, mother and son killed and buried him in the backyard. When asked about the father's whereabouts, they would lie and say he had not yet returned. A heavenly lightning bolt unearthed the father's corpse. Another bolt struck down Junping; the karmic causes for this supernatural punishment were etched into his cadaver.²⁴ The local authorities executed his mother and refused to allow the evildoers' bodies to be buried.²⁵ As in the previous case, the son has no self-control—neither education nor his parents' love constrain him. He thus commits the most loathsome, oedipal act—he sleeps with his mother and slays his father. Since there is no human cure for this behavior, heaven itself strikes him down; it even uses his body as a placard to explain why. Like the previous tale, this one squarely focuses on the protagonist's unfilial behavior—no filial hero appears to save the day. Instead, narratives like this one were written to show the worst of sons and the price they pay for their sins. Their greatest weakness is a lack of self-restraint. Also, only spiritual entities can observe all of the unfilial son's sins and punish him in a fitting manner.

If one of the major differences between early medieval and Sui-Tang narratives is who punishes or corrects the unfilial son, what are we to make of the tale of Xiao Ruiming, an early medieval exemplar? In this tale Heaven directly punishes Zhu Xu. Xiao Ruiming hears of Zhu Xu's outrageous behavior, but he does nothing—he does not even desecrate Zhu's corpse. Crucially, the anecdote about Zhu Xu does not appear in Xiao Ruiming's biography of the early sixth century, *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書. This work only includes the anecdote about him praying for a cure for his mother's illness. The tale of Zhu Xu appears in

the mid-seventh-century *Nanshi*.²⁶ The story of Zhu Xu, then, was a Tang dynasty interpolation. Thus the biography of Xiao Ruiming was merely a conventional early medieval filial piety account that had nothing to do with unfiliality. However, a Tang dynasty editor saw fit to add a story about an unfilial son. To incorporate the anecdote seamlessly into the biography, the editor added the element of Xiao Ruiming wanting to unearth and desecrate Zhu Xu's corpse. Again, the spirit world's punishment is a Sui-Tang element.

EARLY MEDIEVAL NARRATIVES OF UNFILIAL FEMALES

In the early medieval era, the most famous unfilial woman is the wife of the filial son Ding Lan. The narrative's basic plot is as follows: Ding Lan's parent dies early on. Upon growing older, Ding Lan misses his parent so much that he makes an image of him or her; then he serves the image exactly as if it were alive. A disgruntled neighbor either insults or injures the statue. Ding Lan then kills the neighbor. Interestingly, in the tale's earliest versions from the second to the fourth centuries, Ding Lan's wife hardly appears in the tale; and when she does, she does nothing unfilial toward her wooden mother-in-law.²⁷ It is only beginning in the fifth century that versions of the tale begin depicting Ding Lan's wife damaging the image. The fifth-century *Zheng Jizhi Xiaozhi zhuan* 鄭緝之孝子傳 (*Zheng Jishi's Accounts of Filial Offspring*) merely states that she accidentally burned the face of the statue—that night she dreamt that her mother-in-law was in pain. In this version, it was a malicious neighbor who intentionally attacked the image.²⁸ According to the late fifth-century *Yomei bunko kōshiden* version of the tale, simply because she was unfilial Ding Lan's wife burned the statue's face. Ding Lan dreamt that his mother told him, "Your wife burned my face." He thereupon beat and divorced her. Note here that the agent who punishes the wife for her transgression is Ding Lan himself. The only supernatural event is the dream by which the image either expresses her pain or the wife's culpability.

Sui-Tang versions of the tale lay much greater stress on the fact that supernatural agents punished the wife for her misbehavior. According to the late sixth or early seventh-century *Liu Xiang Xiaozitu* 劉向孝子圖 (*Liu Xiang's Tableaus of Filial Offspring*), during the night, Ding's wife burned the face of her mother-in-law's image. Sores then appeared on its face. Two days later, Ding wife's hair mysteriously fell out, as if someone had sheared it off. Only then did she ask for forgiveness. Ding moved his mother's image to the road and made his wife mourn it for three years. One night, with the speed of wind and rain, the image reentered the family's compound on its own accord.²⁹ This version still shares much in common with the previous ones, but this time the supernatural's presence is much more apparent. Ding's wife's head-shaving is obviously a supernatural punishment. Nevertheless, Ding Lan also punishes his wife by making her publicly conduct the three years' mourning rituals for the

statue. The tale's final version comes from the Tang dynasty *Ju Daoxing Soushen ji* 句道興搜神記 (*Ju Daoxing's Records of Searching for the Supernatural*), which was recovered from Dunhuang.³⁰ In this version, Ding Lan's wife justifies her actions, "How can a wooden mother have awareness? Today I bitterly toil and must wait upon it night and day." She then burned the image's face. After Ding Lan's mother informs him through a dream what has transpired, his wife's face develops painful sores. Only after she repents of her sins do the sores heal.³¹ In this version, the troublesome neighbor disappears completely—the only person who attacks the image is the daughter-in-law; moreover, it is not her husband that punishes her, but the spirit world itself. In short, the tale goes from being a revenge narrative in which Ding Lan kills a neighbor who insults his wooden mother to one in which an unfilial daughter-in-law is the culprit whose crime is so great that the gods themselves punish her. Notably, in all of these versions the unfilial behavior of the daughter-in-law merely underscores Ding Lan's own virtuous conduct.

Another type of unfilial female story is one in which a daughter-in-law or female servant mixes an unclean thing in with the food she serves her blind mistress or mother-in-law. The earliest version of this type of tale comes from Gan Bao's 干寶 (*fl.* 317–350) *Soushen ji* 搜神記, where the unfilial fiend was a maidservant. Sheng Yan's 盛彥 mother was ill for a long time and went blind as a result. Sheng insisted on feeding his mother himself. Since he was not satisfied with the maidservant's care for his mother, Sheng often beat her. One day, upon Sheng's absence, the maidservant put maggots into her mistress's food. Sheng's mother thought the food was delicious but strange; she hid some to show her son. Upon seeing the maggots, Sheng embraced his mother and was overcome by emotion. Because of his devotion, his mother's sight was restored.³² In this tale, the unfilial actress is so unimportant that she is neither named nor punished. The focus of the tale is on Sheng Yan's devotion to his mother. Here again we see that an unfilial act merely serves to illuminate a son's perfect filiality.

SUI-TANG NARRATIVES OF UNFILIAL WOMEN

Over time tales of this type, though, came to place a much greater emphasis on the woman's unfilial behavior and heaven's response of punishment. A tale from Tang Lin's 唐臨 (seventh century) *Mingbao ji* 冥報記 (*Records of Miraculous Retribution*) relates a story about an unfilial woman who is simply identified as "A Henan man's wife" 河南人婦. She cared for her blind mother-in-law in an unfilial manner; more specifically, she gave the old crone a stew that consisted of cut up earthworms. Her mother-in-law thought it tasted strange and hid some to show her son. When he found out, he wailed and wanted to take his wife to the district magistrate's office to have her punished, but on the way, there was a crack of thunder and his wife disappeared.

Suddenly she dropped from the sky. Her body and clothing remained as before, but her head had been replaced by that of a white dog. There was no change in her speech, and when asked the reason [for what had happened], she replied, "Because I was unfilial, the gods of heaven have punished me." Her husband sent her before the officials. For a time she begged in the marketplace; what became of her is not known.³³

Unlike early medieval tales, the wife's unfilial behavior is not merely being used to highlight her husband's filial conduct. In fact, he is hardly of any account at all: when he discovers his wife's heinous activities, the best he can do is to take her to the authorities for punishment. There is nothing heroic about his actions; he is of so little account that he is not even named. Instead, spirits have to step in to punish this horrible breach of the moral order. Underscoring the importance of her supernatural punishment, the author explicitly states that it is indeed Heaven that meted out her deserved misfortune.

A similar tale about an unfilial daughter-in-law appears on a Dunhuang document that relates a number of popular filial piety narratives.

Xiang Sheng 向生 was a person from Henei 河内. His kind mother was old and blind. At that time, bandits were encroaching the borders; as a result, Xiang Sheng was drafted to fight them. His new bride remained at home. However, she despised Xiang Sheng for being mean in status, so she would consume things that were delectable, while providing her mother-in-law with unpalatable food. Xiang's mother sighed saying, "I have not engrained obedience within you. That is why I suffer these hardships." The new bride was livid with anger. She then went and got pig excrement and mixed it in with her mother-in-law's food; she gave it to her to eat. On top of that, she cursed and insulted her mother-in-law. Heaven observed this unfilial behavior. It sent down a lightning bolt that killed her. On her back were words that said, "Xiang Sheng's wife has committed [one of] the five unforgivable sins (*wuni* 五逆).³⁴ Heaven thereby has used a lightning bolt to kill her."³⁵

Although in this case the husband is named, the main focus of the tale is squarely on the daughter-in-law's unfilial actions. The chaos caused by her aberrant conduct cannot be contained by a human agent (her husband is not present); thus, Heaven must step in to correct this abomination.

One of the striking aspects of tales with this motif of a daughter-in-law befouling the food she prepares for her mother-in-law is that it signals the abhorrence of polluted food. Since eating food laced with such things as maggots, earthworms, or pig excrement would be unpleasant but certainly not lethal, one wonders why Heaven finds these acts so outrageous? The skeptic Wang Chong

王充 (27–97?) also had trouble understanding the belief that Heaven would strike down those who give others impure food. He states that,

Some people will argue that giving impure things to eat or drink is a great crime before Heaven, which in killing the culprit does not pay attention to time. Great crimes in the eyes of kings are high-treason, rebellion, and lawlessness, whereas Heaven considers the offering of unclean things to others as food or drink as a serious offence. The crimes condemned by Heaven are of a different gravity. Were the light and serious ones all equally dealt with, the king would have to imitate Heaven's government, and put to death every one who had given others unclean things to eat or drink. When the Sage Kings were ruling, they had not such a penalty. That would mean that the Sage Kings were remiss, and had forgotten this punishment.³⁶

Wang ridicules the idea that Heaven punishes for such a minor offence. To underscore the absurdity of the belief, he notes that the sage kings never killed people for such a trivial matter. Nevertheless, in putting forth many arguments against this belief, he underscores its prevalence. There are two reasons why his contemporaries viewed feeding others impure food as morally reprehensible. First, in early China, there was a definite fear of ritual pollution. Robin Yates tells us that, "Pollution was perceived to come from external agents to endanger individuals and good order in society, and was something that was abhorrent and to be avoided at all costs. If one was affected by pollution, then rituals of purification had to be performed."³⁷ At first glance, even though eating maggots or pig excrement does not seem that dangerous, it exposes one to invasion by "polluted vital energy" (*xieqi* 邪氣). The situation is made worse by the fact that if the victim did not realize or discover the polluted food, he or she would not know the necessity of undergoing a purification ritual. In short, eating polluted food could indeed cause one to become sick or even die.

Another terrible aspect of this type of act was its mundaneness. In the majority of families daily meals were prepared by the most oppressed members of the household: daughters-in-law and female servants. If these women held a grudge against their mothers-in-law or mistresses, they had opportunities three times a day to slip something unclean into their food. A mother-in-law or mistress could snoop around the kitchen, but she probably would not be present during the preparation of each meal, so she could never be completely certain what she was eating. Thus, sabotaging food was a perfect weapon of revenge for subordinate women. This distressing fear and lack of control is probably why such behavior earned so much scorn from elders. This emphasis that Heaven strikes down those women who engage in this form of resistance underscores the real fear felt by mothers-in-law and mistresses.

WHY THE EMPHASIS ON SUPERNATURAL PUNISHMENT?

Scholars of Chinese literature would say that when filial sons correct or punish the unfilial this process can be labeled ethical or human retribution, whereas when gods or spirits do so it is heavenly or divine retribution. Individuals, whether humans or animals, respond to or reciprocate (*bao* 報) actions that affect them or their families, whereas the spirits or Heaven respond to or reciprocate human actions that either conform to or violate ethical norms.³⁸ What accounts then for this shift in early medieval tales of the unfilial in which we see human retribution to Tang stories where divine retribution becomes predominant? The best explanation would be the increasing ubiquity of Daoism and Buddhism. In an effort to meet social expectations, both religions emphasized the importance of filial piety. Fourth-century Daoist texts, such as *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律 (*Nüqing's Statues against Demons*) and *Chisongzi zhongjie jing* 赤松子中戒經 (*Essential Precepts of Master Redpine*), already indicate that deities in the celestial administration were minutely observing people's behavior and punishing those who were unfilial to their parents or put impure things into food.³⁹ A sixth-century Daoist text, the *Shier shangpin quanjie* 十二上品全誡 (*The Twelve Highest Precepts with Explanation*) posits filiality as its eleventh precept. If one fails to be filial, one can expect six types of retribution, one of which is being struck by a thunderbolt.⁴⁰ In short, the supernatural punishments we witness in the Sui-Tang tales were already articulated in early medieval Daoist texts. However, our surviving examples of Sui-Tang unfilial sons and daughters-in-law all seem to come from Buddhist texts.

One of Buddhism's greatest attractions for early medieval Chinese was its all-encompassing explanation of good and bad fortune through the concept of karma—one's present circumstances are determined by one's actions in this life and previous ones.⁴¹ Karl Kao notes that in Buddhist tales that illustrate karmic retribution the protagonist is both the agent and the victim of the action he/she performs; in other words, the narratives shows the protagonist engaging in an evil action and the negative consequences that he/she must suffer for committing it. This type of story thereby emphasizes the karmic deed that brings about the negative consequences that constitute the rest of the narrative.⁴² Robert Ford Campany likewise indicates that early medieval Chinese miracle tales tend to emphasize the horrible punishments one will receive for committing sins.⁴³ Sui-Tang narratives of the unfilial perfectly match these descriptions. The first part of the tales of Wang Yanwei, He Junping, the Henan man's wife, and Xiang Sheng, all dwell on the unforgivable way in which they treat their parents or mother-in-law. The second half of each tale then describes the horrific punishment they received for their sins. In contrast, the early medieval tales of Dong An, Yuan Gu, and Ding Lan do not fit this format at all.

The Sui-Tang tales of unfilial sons and daughters-in-law have many other clues that mark them as Buddhist. Three of the tales come from books that

were compiled by Buddhist laymen. The *Guixin lu*, which contains the tales of Wang Yanwei and He Junping, is almost certainly a work by someone with Buddhist sympathies, which is why Daoshi in his *Fayuan zhulin* lists it with other works favorable to Buddhism. One of Wang Yanwei's sinful habits is that he likes to hunt, an activity that Buddhists vigorously condemned.⁴⁴ The story of the wife of a man from Henan comes from the well-known collection of Buddhist miracle tales called the *Mingbao ji*.⁴⁵ The Xiang Sheng narrative is the only one that is from a non-Buddhist text, yet the tale's author uses the Buddhist term *wuni* "the five unforgivable sins" to describe the wife's despicable act.

CONCLUSION

What becomes apparent from reading the medieval tales of unfilial children is that there is a sizable change in their contents over time. Tales that were written during the early medieval period never allow the motif of an unfilial child to stand alone; it is always incorporated into a larger narrative about a heroic filial son. By period's end, we begin to see stories that solely feature unfilial sons and daughters-in-law. Another dissimilarity is that, in the early medieval narratives, it is the hero's own actions that restores order to the world. In the Sui-Tang tales, there is no filial son to set things right; instead, heaven or the spirit world has to do so. What accounts for these changes? Early medieval authors were inculcating the Confucian definition of filial piety in an upper class that did not automatically follow Confucian ritual precepts. Thus early medieval Confucians needed to broadcast stories of men who epitomized the value of filial piety. By Sui-Tang times, though, authors with Buddhist sympathies were borrowing the motif of unfilial children to create tales that illustrated the workings of Buddhist karmic retribution and the Daoist celestial bureaucracy. Unfilial actions often transpired in secret, or when the man of the house was away; thus, these breaches of proper behavior, which caused horrifying tears in the natural and moral fabric of society, could not be solved through human remediation. Only the all-encompassing system of karma or the celestial bureaucracy could rightfully and fully punish such immorality.

Another important change was that women increasingly loomed larger in the tales. In early versions, the person who antagonized Ding Lan's wooden mother was not his wife, but a neighbor. Over time Ding's wife was gradually transformed into the primary villain. Likewise, the tale of Sheng Yan's servant feeding her mistress unclean things was later transformed into a number of narratives in which a daughter-in-law mistreats her mother-in-law. Why do rebellious daughters-in-law figure more and more prominently in these tales? An important early medieval trend was that elite families were becoming increasingly large and complex; by Tang times, large extended families were the norm among the elite.⁴⁶ As elite families endeavored to create elaborate, extended

families, daughters-in-law were increasingly viewed as the most potent threat to family solidarity. The tales about unruly daughters-in-law who sabotage their mother-in-laws' food also disclose what patriarchs feared most—that in carrying out their numerous and essential duties, daughters-in-law would quietly sabotage the health and welfare of the patriline.⁴⁷

The tales of unfilial sons also disclose what patriarchs feared of their sons. In a world in which fathers and sons were increasingly living under the same roof, nothing caused a patriarch more anxiety than sonly disobedience. Parents obviously worried that their grown sons would engage in dangerous activities, such as hunting. Mixing with men of a bad reputation was even more perilous because they could engage in illegal activities that might implicate not only the son, but the entire family. Thus, good sons are those who listen to their parents' admonitions and avoid illegal activities that might endanger the family. Ultimately, what makes a son unfilial is that he only thinks about his own wants and needs, rather than those of his parents.

One last point is that, despite the literary existence of nefarious unfilial children, they never matched the popularity of renowned filial children. The Sui-Tang stories of unfilial children appear to have had limited circulation. They left no traces in Tang encyclopedias. There are no known depictions of them on artifacts. None of these tales were incorporated into either the pantheon of the filial piety stories in popular works known as *Ershisixiao*. The stories of unfilial children that continued to have wide currency were the early medieval ones in which the behavior of the evil son or daughter-in-law was merely a foil for the exemplary conduct of a filial son. Premodern Chinese did not want to be merely warned about the negative consequences of acting in an unfilial manner, they also wanted to be uplifted by the example of filial sons who set the world aright.

NOTES

1. Yoshikawa Tadao, personal communication, January 1992.
2. See my *Selfless Offspring*.
3. Ibid., chapter 3.
4. The most extensive discussion and catalogue of motifs associated with tales of unfilial children is the PhD dissertation of Ren, *Zhongguo Xiaoxing gushi yanjiu*, 275–308.
5. An earlier version of the biography of Xiao Ruiming does not contain this anecdote, which is only included in this Tang dynasty version. For more on how Tang dynasty authors added supernatural elements to this type of narrative see below.
6. Li Yanshou (612–678), *Nan shi*, 73.1815.
7. Ouyang Xun (557–641), *Yiwen leiju*, 33.586, as well as Li Fang (925–996) et al., *Taiping yulan*, 378.8a and 482.6a.
8. Kuroda Akira, *Kōshidenzu no kenkyū*, 373–374.
9. Yōgaku no Kai, *Kōshiden chūkai*, 211. The account of this conversation found in the Tang dynasty popular encyclopedia, the *Leilin*, is extremely similar but much shorter and less

detailed. See Shi Jinbo, Huang Zhenhua, and Nie Hongyin, *Leilin yanjiu*, 254–255, and P 2621 in Wang Chongmin, *Dunhuang, bianwenji* 2.904–905, and Wang Sanqing, *Dunhuang leishu*, 241.

10. Yu Lizheng compiled the *Leilin* sometime between 656 and 679. See Wang, *Dunhuang leishu*, 1.69. Given how close its Dong An's tale is in content and language to that of the *Yōmei bunko Kōshiden* version and its correspondence to iconography of the Dong An tale found on Northern Dynasties artifacts, I believe this is a late fourth or early fifth-century version of the tale.

11. Shi et al., *Leilin yanjiu*, 254.

12. Yōgaku no Kai, *Kōshiden*, 212. The *Funahashi Kōshiden* 舟橋孝子伝 version is somewhat different. For example, Wang Qi forces Dong An's mother to eat three sacrificial animals three times a day. He then threatened to stab her. She thereupon fainted and died. See Yōgaku no Kai, *Kōshiden*, 214–215.

13. *Analects* 2.7; Hung, *Lunyu yinde*, 2–3.

14. For a detailed analysis of this image see Kuroda, *Kōshidenzu*, 602–606, and Nishino, “Yōmeibu kōshiden no seikaku narabini Seikeibun to no kankei ni tsuite,” 32–33.

15. Kuroda, *Kōshidenzu*, 602–608.

16. *Ibid.*, 608. For the best images of each of these three screen sections, see Nagahiro Toshio, *Rikuchō jidai bijutsu no kenkyū*, images 54, 55, and 56.

17. Yōgaku no Kai, *Kōshiden*, 62. The *Funahashi Kōshiden* version of this tale is basically the same, but it is a bit more prolix and has some Buddhist terms and concepts. See *ibid.*, 62–63. For a slightly different version, see *Taiping yulan*, 519.3a. The *Ju Daoxing Soushen ji* from Dunhuang has an even fuller version of this tale. See Wang, *Dunhuang bianwen*, 2:885–886.

18. Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*, 132, and Kuroda, *Kōshidenzu*, 214. For a listing of the Eastern Han artifacts that this tale adorns, see Kuroda, *Kōshidenzu no kenkyū*, 198–200, and his *Kōshidenzu*, 300–305. For a listing of Northern Dynasties artifacts that have images of the Yuan Gu tale, see Zou Qingquan, *Bei-Wei xiaozhi huaxiang yanjiu*, 128–129.

19. See Kuroda, *Kōshidenzu no kenkyū*, 201, and Loo, *An Exhibition of Chinese Stone Sculptures*, Plate 32.

20. Yōgaku no Kai, *Kōshiden chūkai*, 213.

21. For this term's connection with other Buddhist works in this era, see Wang Liqi, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie*, 335–338. As for the *Guixin lu*, there is not much information on this work. In a listing of books that concern Buddhism, the *Fayuan zhulin* states that there was a *Guixin lu* in thirty fascicles that was written by Xiao Xuanci 蕭宣慈, who held the Tang dynasty position of Weiwei lushi 威衛錄事. See Daoshi (d. 683), *Fayuan zhulin*, 100.695b. However, it is not clear whether this is the same *Guixin lu* from which the two stories were quoted. After quoting the two tales, Daoshi wrote, “These two manifestations on the right are from Li's 李 *Guixin lu*.” This would suggest that the two narratives came from a different work with the same title that was authored by a man surnamed Li. See *Fayuan zhulin*, 49.365c.

22. Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin*, 49.365c.

23. For earlier tales of sons sleeping with their mothers, see Goldin, Chapter 3, in this volume.

24. Death by lightning would become a fate in Song tales of unfilial children; see Zhang, Chapter 2, in this volume.

25. Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin*, T53, 49.365c.

26. Xiao Zixian (489–537), *Nan Qi shu*, 55.963.
27. For summaries of the different early medieval versions of this tale, see Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*, 191–194.
28. Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin*, 49.361c.
29. Ibid., 49.361.
30. Dewoskin, “The ‘Sou-shen-chi’ and the ‘Chih-kuai’ Tradition,” 57–59.
31. Wang, *Dunhuang Bianwen*, 2:886.
32. Gan Bao, *Soushen ji*, 11.281; *Taiping yulan*, 948.6a; and Fan Xuanling, *Jin shu*, 88.2276–2277.
33. The translation is that of Donald E. Gjerston, *Miraculous Retribution*, 237–238. The Chinese text can be found in Li Fang et al., *Taiping guangji*, 162.324, and the *Fayuan zhulin*, 49.365–366. The *Fayuan zhulin* places this tale in the Sui dynasty (581–617).
34. The Five Unforgivable Sins is a Buddhist concept. These five sins are to kill one’s father, to kill one’s mother, to harm an *arhat* (“worthy one,” a person who will achieve *nirvana* after death), to attack or throw into chaos a group of monks, or to do evil in a Buddhist holy place.
35. Wang, *Dunhuang bianwen*, 2:909.
36. Lau et al., *Lunheng zhuzi suoyin*, 1:90. I have slightly modified the translation that comes from Alfred Forke, *Lun-hêng*, 1:291.
37. Yates, “Purity and Pollution in early China,” 496.
38. See Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story*, 105–106; Kao, “Bao and Baoying, and Zhang, *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural in Early Medieval China*, 82–102.
39. Kohn, “Counting Good Deeds and Days of Life,” 841, and her “Immortal Parents and Universal Kin,” 95–97.
40. Kohn, “Immortal Parents,” 97.
41. Gjerston, *Miraculous Retribution*, 121–126.
42. Kao, “Bao and Baoying,” 130–131.
43. Campamy, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 33–34.
44. Chapple, *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*, 26–39.
45. Gjerston, *Miraculous Retribution*, 68–92.
46. Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*, 14–17.
47. Interestingly, in many Song tales of unfilial children, the main perpetrators become the sons and their victims are their mothers; see Zhang, Chapter 2, in this volume.

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NEGATIVE ROLE MODELS

Unfilial Stories in Song Miscellaneous Writing

CONG ELLEN ZHANG

Since ancient times filial piety (*xiao* 孝) has been a crucial component of the Chinese ethical worldview, applauded for maintaining familial harmony and political and social order. Its centrality in Chinese life is evidenced in a Confucian classic by the same name (*Xiaojing* 孝經, *The Classic of Filial Piety*) and the definition of unfilial behavior as one of the most heinous crimes in successive legal codes.¹ Filial piety was further promoted throughout Chinese history by a large body of literature, including tales, biographies, family instructions, and other forms of moral and religious persuasion.² From the Song (960–1279) onward, rising literacy and the development of vernacular literature led to the composition and wide circulation of ballads, plays, and short stories on filial exemplars to both urban and rural residents.³

While unfilial behavior was touched on in the Confucian classics and disrespectful children were occasionally portrayed in earlier literature, it was not until the Song dynasty that a large number of unfilial stories appeared.⁴ Mainly recorded by *biji* 筆記 (miscellaneous writing) authors, these accounts featured sons and daughters-in-law failing to adhere to prescriptions of familial devotion. The actual crimes committed by the miscreants varied greatly, as did the consequences of their offenses. Not all wrongdoers in the unfilial tales were convicted by local authorities or condemned by their families and communities. What the stories did highlight was the retribution that offenders received from natural and supernatural powers. Many suffered a swift and ghastly death.

The growing visibility of unfilial stories in the Song can be best understood in the larger context of the *biji* authors' and their fellow scholar-officials' interest in circulating their *jianwen* 見聞, things "seen and heard," acquired through frequent travel and rich administrative experience in disparate areas across the country.⁵ The newly gained knowledge about local customs and conditions also motivated the same men to correct and reform vulgar and inappropriate practices.⁶ More specifically, Song *biji* accounts documented, in vivid language,

men and women who deviated from normative social and cultural expectations, as well as the severe consequences of their behavior. Sons in particular were singled out for abusing and deserting widowed mothers, evidence of older women's vulnerable position in the household. Another noticeable characteristic of the unfilial stories is their focus on ordinary people. This attempt to promote filial behavior through negative role models occurred at a time when Song educated men were relegating their own reverent-care duties to their wives and other family members.⁷ In this sense, the stories marked the beginning of a new trend in representing filial piety as a class-specific virtue in the Song.

This chapter is based on thirty anecdotes from six *biji* works completed in the Northern (960–1127) and Southern Song (1127–1279). Due to its large size, more than half of the stories come from Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123–1202) *Record of the Listener* (*Yi jian zhi* 夷堅志), a work of multiple installments compiled in the second half of the twelfth century. It should be noted that it is nearly impossible to trace the exact origin of any particular story. There was, however, strong indication that many accounts transmitted orally before being written down. Hong Mai, for example, related in multiple prefaces and individual stories the process through which word-of-mouth tales circulated within a large network of informants before being recorded and selected for publication.⁸ In fact, it was customary for Song writers to claim that they either personally witnessed what they had compiled or heard a particular anecdote from a trustworthy person.⁹ This emphasis on the reliability of the source material is evident in the many specific details found in these unfilial stories, including the time of the event and the exact name and residence of the offenders.

THE THREE TYPES OF UNFILIAL DEEDS

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the multilayered meanings and expectations of filial piety in different periods of Chinese history. To put it simply, filial piety requires that children, sons in particular, obey, respect, and care for living parents with devotion and reverence, mourn them with ritual propriety, and honor their memory and those of more remote ancestors through prescribed ceremonies.¹⁰ These ideals were most notably promoted in society through filial tales and tomb arts in early and medieval times.¹¹ The central and local governments also routinely selected and rewarded those who had demonstrated extraordinary commitment to their parents' well-being or mourned their loss according to or exceeding the rites. While exemplary deeds continued to be singled out for celebration in later periods, the Song witnessed the first time in Chinese history when unfilial stories proliferated. Based on the nature of the offense, unfilial deeds featured in *biji* works can be roughly divided into three categories.

Stories in the first category depict parents being neglected or deprived of their most basic needs. In the following, a quite typical anecdote shows the extent to which a daughter-in-law mistreated her mother-in-law:

The wife of Xie Seven 謝七 from Qilidian 七里店 in Yushan 玉山 County in Xin Prefecture 信州 (Shangrao, Jiangxi) was not filial to her mother-in-law.¹² She would feed her mother-in-law barley, and even failed to give her enough of it while she herself ate rice. On the seventh day of the seventh month in the thirtieth year of the Shaoxing 紹興 reign (1161), the woman and her husband went out, leaving the mother-in-law watching the house. An itinerant Buddhist monk happened to pass by and begged for food from the old woman. She smiled and said, "I do not even have enough food to feed myself. How could I have any extra for you?" The monk, pointing at the rice in the bowl, said, "You could give me that." The mother-in-law shook her head and said, "The white rice is for my daughter-in-law. I do not dare to touch it. Otherwise, I would be scolded and humiliated when she returns." The monk insisted on having the rice, but the mother-in-law did not dare to give it to him.¹³

This story portrays a mother-in-law being neglected and intimidated by her daughter-in-law. The abuse must have gone on for some time because, even when the son and daughter-in-law were not around, the old woman continued to live in fear. The gravity of the junior couple's offense can also be understood through a comparison with typical filial exemplars. Sons and daughters-in-law, for example, were often lauded for taking care of parents' basic welfare as well as satisfying such whimsical desires as a piece of fruit or fish in the freezing winter.¹⁴ In this context, for the daughter-in-law to give the mother lower-quality food when she herself enjoyed fine rice was a serious transgression. Several other stories share similar characteristics. A fisherman, for example, was accused of not allowing his mother to have even one of his catch.¹⁵ Another son could not stop himself from gobbling down food that was meant for his sick mother.¹⁶

Not only did unfilial children do the bare minimum for the material comfort of aging parents, they were also portrayed as taking advantage of parents. The second category of unfilial stories focuses on greedy sons coveting parents' property. This was especially true of one type of property, the savings that parents made in connection with their own funeral and burial, which were costly for both rich and poor.¹⁷ As such, for peace of mind, families habitually prepared in advance and this opened the door of opportunity for greedy sons. One story, for example, features a man selling his mother's China fir coffin for 13,000 cash behind her back. Upon hearing the news, the mother wept and said, "I am eighty-five and could die any time. Nothing else is important to me. The only item that is useful for this dying person is this piece of lumber. You are my son. How could you bear to take it from me?"¹⁸ In another anecdote, a son was similarly portrayed as so avaricious that he profited from the sale of his parents' coffins three times over:

Wang 王 Thirty was from the Village of Filiality and Honesty in Poyang 鄱陽 (in Jiangxi). Earlier, his parents had purchased two coffins made of fragrant wood to prepare for their deaths. Wang exchanged the coffins with two made of China fir from Xin Prefecture. He later sold those again and replaced them with coffins from trunks of Chinese ilex. When his mother died, since he wanted to keep the coffin for his own use, he bought a pine coffin in which to bury his mother.¹⁹

Here we have two sons who sold and replaced their parents' coffins, depriving them the one piece of property that was essential to a safe passage to the afterlife. What Wang Thirty did was especially outrageous. After exchanging his parents' coffins for profit not once but three times, he ended up burying his mother in a coffin that was made of the cheapest material, reserving the higher-quality one for himself.

Despite their differences in focus, stories in the above two categories share one similarity. The son and daughter-in-law treated their parents badly for the purpose of benefiting materially. Weighing their own interests against the welfare of senior family members, they acted selfishly and ignored their filial duties. In comparison, the third type of unfilial tale, which accounts for half of the anecdotes under discussion, features far more malicious acts. This included verbally and physically abusive sons and daughters-in-law calling a parent names, abandoning, and even murdering the parent. One son, for example, went so far as to not rescue his mother when she fell in the river and even condemned villagers for saving her.²⁰ Another attempted to desert his mother during a flood.²¹ Yet another son considered his mother such a burden that, not only did he treat her badly on a daily basis, he also tried to suffocate her when they were traveling and begging for food together.²² In two separate cases, a son and a daughter-in-law even fed the mother feces.²³ The following case offers especially gruesome details about a couple abusing the mother:

Villager Chen 陳 Fourteen in Xingguo 興國 County of Gan Prefecture 贛州 was extremely unfilial toward his mother. After having a dispute with his neighbor, he secretly colluded with his wife to get his mother into a fight with the neighbor. His mother had been suffering from eye problems and was old. She could not bear the hurling and jolting and died from the blows suffered during the altercation.²⁴

This story makes it clear at the very beginning that Chen Fourteen and his wife were extremely unfilial. But hardly would anyone expect that the couple would go so far as to use the frail mother to fight their neighbor. Had the plot worked, it would have benefited the couple in two ways: first, since the mother was old and nearly blind, she could easily have died from the fight. That would have removed the burden of supporting an aging parent from the couple's shoulders.

Second, Chen and his wife could have blamed the mother's death on the neighbor, which would have settled an old score. As our discussion will show shortly, the plot did cause the death of the mother. But the couple did not gain anything from it. And severe punishment would soon follow.

One salient point emerges from our discussion of these unfilial stories: while Song *biji* authors included hundreds of filial accounts about both elite and ordinary men and women, their portrayal of unfilial behavior almost exclusively focused on the general populace. This relative silence on unfilial acts in elite families certainly does not mean the scarcity of such behavior. Zhou Hui 周輝 (twelfth century), a contemporary of Hong Mai, had very low opinions of the morality of his fellow elites. Zhou lamented that these men would go to great lengths to avoid what would harm their own health and the good fortune of their families. But when it came to acquiring beautiful women, they would not hesitate even if they were in mourning.²⁵ Zhou was equally dismayed at the failure of later generations in obeying and following the wishes of their elders. Even though many families had family instructions inscribed in stone, Zhou wrote, "Only one or two out of hundreds of sons and grandsons would actually listen to the words of their ancestors."²⁶ They felt no shame in asking for help from friends, colleagues, or mere acquaintances, in order to be able to hold a luxurious funeral for parents. Some even tried to make a profit through their parents' funerals. Zhou added, "None of these constitute filial behavior."²⁷

Despite his dismay with his fellow scholar-officials, Zhou Hui did not point fingers at any particular person or family. His criticism took the form of generic statements. In contrast, the *biji* writers under discussion were much more specific and outspoken about the unfilial acts of common people; this is made clear with references to such simple names as Wang Thirty, Chen Fourteen, or the wife of Xie Seven. This attempt to distinguish between the scholar-official class and the rest of society is also seen from the vivid and detailed descriptions of outrageous unfilial acts. Almost all the stories discussed so far fit this description: sons and daughters-in-law were portrayed as depriving parents of decent food and coffins, physically abusing parents, and even neglecting or threatening parents' lives.

PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS: THE MOTHER AND THE UNFILIAL SON

Another distinct characteristic of Song stories of the unfilial is their uneven focus on both the violator and the victim. This can be seen in four different ways. First, more sons than daughters-in-law were featured as the offending parties. Of the thirty stories under discussion, twenty-one out of thirty identified a son as the sole or leading party, while only six daughters-in-law were accused of acting alone against a parent(s)-in-law.²⁸ Moreover, some sons were said to have allowed, even encouraged, their wives' unfilial behavior. The woman who fed her mother-in-law barley appeared to have had an acquiescent husband. Second, mothers,

more than fathers or the parents as a whole, are the victims in these stories. In the thirty stories under discussion, twenty feature mothers, mostly widows, as the recipients of their children's transgression or violence. Third, taken together, half (fifteen out of thirty) of the stories were exclusively concerned with sons neglecting and mistreating their mothers. Fourth, when a household did not have an adult male, the filial behavior and intentions of the daughter-in-law often came under close scrutiny.

What general conclusions can we draw from these observations? The most common unfilial scenario involved sons abusing their mothers, often older widows living at the mercy of adult sons and daughters-in-law.²⁹ This conclusion corroborates Patricia Ebrey's research on marriage and women's lives in the Song period. Ebrey has found that more wives survived their husbands as first marriage partners than vice versa.³⁰ Moreover, when men survived their wives and remarried, their second wives were generally considerably younger. As a result, not only did these marriages last for shorter periods of time, they also left many younger widows than those who remained unmarried after the deaths of their first partners.³¹ A third factor to consider is that, when a senior woman died, her husband would still occupy an authoritative position in the household.³² After the death of a father, not only did caring for one's mother fall on the shoulders of her sons, the power structure of the family also changed. In the absence of a father, it was more difficult for the senior woman to demand the same amount of respect from her sons and daughters-in-law.³³

The above phenomenon was duly noted by Song scholar-officials. Hong Mai's contemporary, Yuan Cai 袁采 (active 1163–1195), specifically pointed out older women's vulnerability when their sons were in charge of family matters and free to engage in all sorts of transactions behind their mothers' backs:

For women who live a long life, old age is especially hard to bear because most women must rely on others for their existence. Of her relatives from before she was married, a good father is even more valuable than a good grandfather; a good brother is of even more value than a good father; a good nephew is even more valuable than a good brother. Of the relatives she acquires through marriage, a good husband is even more valuable than a good father-in-law; a good son is even more valuable than a good husband; and a good grandson is even more valuable than a good son. Women often enjoy wealth and honor in their youth but find their old age difficult to endure because of this principle. It would be well for their relatives to be sympathetic.³⁴

Yuan Cai's writing impresses us with the compassion he had for older women. When young, women had the support of fathers, husbands, and brothers. But life became unpredictable as they aged and were at the mercy of junior generations.³⁵ For this reason, Yuan called for family members to be sympathetic of

old women's helpless situations. He implied that, after a father's passing, there was no guarantee that the mother could rely on her son's devotion, a concern that is well-supported by our discussion. For this reason, Yuan Cai imagined that the more junior relatives an old woman had, including grandsons and even nephews from her natal family, the better the chances that she would be properly cared for. Yuan Cai intended for his writing to be advice to promote a harmonious and prosperous family life and he did not prescribe punishments for unfilial and other immoral behavior. Given that he repeatedly warned his readers, and family heads in particular, the disastrous consequences of failing to manage human relationships in a proper manner, he would have had no sympathy for sons and daughters-in-law who were outrageously insensitive to their mother's life and welfare. Yuan's writing is particularly important for the light it sheds on the way the responsibilities of caring for older women were shared among different parties, including sons, grandsons, even maternal nephews, a perspective that stories about the unfilial did not provide.

What *biji* authors did demonstrate was a strong ambivalence toward the daughter-in-law when she was the only family member that an aging widow had to rely on. Even when the junior woman had proved her devotion to the mother-in-law, public trust in her was often fragile. Two stories especially illustrate this point.

The first anecdote begins with a statement that a daughter-in-law had been filial to her mother-in-law. But when the mother died suddenly, neighbors held the daughter-in-law accountable. She was arrested and, under torture, confessed to having poisoned the mother. The daughter-in-law nonetheless tried to prove her innocence on her day of execution. She handed a pomegranate tree bud to the prison guard and said, "I did not kill my mother-in-law. If Heaven knows the truth, it will have this flower grow into a tree in stone cracks. If I am guilty, the flower will die within a day." Sure enough, the next day, the bud grew new leaves. It soon became a tree three feet in height and began bearing fruit.³⁶

In another story, a daughter-in-law, who herself had been a widow for twenty years, remained very filial to her mother-in-law. But when the senior woman died from the meat the daughter-in-law fed her, neighbors, just as in the previous case, accused the daughter-in-law of murdering the mother. Unlike in the first story, this case had a happy ending. The county sheriff discovered that it was venom from centipedes in the kitchen that had actually killed the old woman. The daughter-in-law was subsequently exonerated and released.³⁷

These anecdotes share several similarities. Two daughters-in-law were said to have been filial to their mothers-in-law. Yet they ended up being accused by neighbors of poisoning the older women. Both eventually proved their innocence, one with the help of Heaven, the other by the local authority. A more important parallel underlies these two cases. Neither household had an adult male figure. Subsequently, deep-rooted suspicions against the daughter-in-law

of her intention toward the mother easily swayed public opinion, leading to the junior woman being branded a murderer. What is also interesting in these two cases is that both daughters-in-law were accused of poisoning their mother-in-law, further highlighting the role food and reverent care in general played in public conceptions of filial performance. After all, filial children were routinely praised for going to great lengths to obtain fine and rare food items for their parents. Conversely, those who did not provide for their seniors in a proper manner, as in the cases of the daughter-in-law feeding the mother-in-law barley instead of rice and the son refusing to give his mother fish, would automatically be labeled unfilial and face grave consequences. The underlying message in these anecdotes was clear: at a time when sustenance was a major concern for ordinary families, seniors, and especially older women, could be seen as a burden, and therefore were susceptible to becoming victims of negligence. Even though this often happened within the confines of the household, perpetrators were constantly under neighbors' watchful eyes. Given their access to and involvement in food preparation and allocation, daughters-in-law were natural targets of mistrust. Any additional acrimony between her and the parents could lead to even deeper suspicion and serious consequences.³⁸

PUNISHING THE UNFILIAL

In a recent study, Alister Inglis has found that "Belief in divine retribution for misdemeanors perpetrated in life was widespread during Song times and is particularly documented by the *Record of the Listener*. It is often difficult—if not impossible—to distinguish between cases of retribution in its Buddhist or Taoist forms and those associated with popular religion."³⁹ This observation can be applied to Song *biji* writing in general. A central theme that connected Song stories of the filial and unfilial is that good deeds were to be rewarded and bad behavior, even bad intentions, were to be punished. This tendency can be seen in generic statements such as "The acts of loyal officials and filial sons can move Heaven and Earth as well as ghosts and spirits" and "Unfilial behavior would shrink one's descendants over time."⁴⁰ The unfilial stories especially stand out for their rich detail and vivid language in highlighting the grave consequences for the violators. Punishments were not always delivered by the justice system. Rather, they often came from nature and supernatural powers, which manifested no tolerance for the unfilial.

The following story stands out for its use of graphic language in portraying retribution to an unfilial daughter-in-law:

The wife of Zhang Ten 張十 of Wujiang 吳江 [in Jiangsu] was obsessed with killing animals and did not treat her parents-in-law properly. In the twenty-ninth year of the Shaoxing reign (1159), when she was sixty and fell ill, foul sores grew on both her thighs. Maggots ate her bones and

marrows. She moaned and groaned so loud that her neighbors could hear her. Later, she would eat her own excrement. And she also gnawed on the floor mat.⁴¹

The woman died a year later after enduring extreme physical pain and public humiliation. Other miscreants also suffered tremendously. About Chen Fourteen, who caused his mother's death by pushing her into a fight with a neighbor, we learn the following:

Chen and his wife subsequently brought a lawsuit at the county government, claiming that their "mother was beaten and murdered." Neighbors and his sister both testified that the accusation was false. The county government subsequently took Chen to prison. He died before torture was used on him. This happened in the sixth year of the Qiandao 乾道 reign (1170). Three years later, Chen's wife was crossing a creek on her way to visit her daughter when she was shaken by thunder and struck to death in the water by lightning. Upon hearing the news, her son ran to the stream. Picking a long vine, he tied up his mother's body and pulled it out of the water. People on the bank tried to persuade him to carry the body on his back [to move it back to their house]. He would not listen. There was again thunder and lightning. He was similarly struck to death. The family line thus became extinct.⁴²

In a way, Chen was fortunate to have died immediately following his arrest, as what happened to his wife was much more condemning and horrifying. Not only was she executed by lightning, the couple's only son also perished while trying to retrieve his mother's body.

There are two more important details to note in the story: first, Chen's wife was struck to death three years after her conspiracy with her husband, an indication that Heaven did not forget or forgive an offense of this magnitude. Once an unfilial crime was committed, punishment was to be expected, even though it might not always be delivered right away. The second point has to do with the reaction of Chen's sister and son. Due to the public nature of the brawl, the Chens' accusation against the neighbor did not seem to have been taken seriously by the local authorities from the very beginning. By stating that even the sister testified against her brother, the storyteller implied that, when it came to unfilial behavior, even family members would and should not tolerate one of their own behaving in such a fashion. As for the couple's son, he did not do what was expected of him, which was to show respect to his mother's body, even though she had been an exceptionally unfilial person. Their combined offense was too despicable for Heaven to show any mercy; the second round of thunder and lightning killed the son, leading to the demise of the family. By ending the Chens' descent line, Heaven sent a clear message to all unfilial children: not only would

they have to endure grave consequences for their vicious acts, they also put their descendants and family in an impossible position.

The outrage over unfilial acts was so powerful that, in some cases, the neglected parents were given a voice in calling on Heaven's intervention. The father of an unfilial son could no longer stand his son's mistreatment, going so far as praying at a local shrine for years that the son be "hurt by a snake or devoured by a tiger." Surely, after the father's death, the son was fatally attacked by a tiger. His family continued to be haunted by ghosts and had to move away. The recorder added that members of the clan all wished that the father had been able to witness such divine intervention.⁴³

Of all the punishments suffered by the unfilial, the most common is execution by lightning. In addition to Chen Fourteen's wife, this was the experience of multiple sons and daughters-in-law, such as Yao 要 Two:

In 1153, the wife of Yao Two of Gusu 姑蘇 [in Jiangsu] gave birth to a boy. Yao Two's mother, while holding her grandson, accidentally dropped him onto the ground and killed the baby. Knowing that her son was a violent man, she did not know what to do. Yao Two, however, acted as if he did not mind.

Several days later, he asked his mother: "I have not visited my maternal uncle for some time. I caught a large fish today and would like to give it to him as a gift. Would you want to go with me?" His mother was overjoyed and gladly agreed to go with him. Bringing blankets for overnight accommodation, they boarded a boat. After sailing for several *li*, they arrived at a quiet place with no one in sight.⁴⁴ Yao Two stopped the oar. With an axe in his hand, he cursed angrily, "You gave birth to me and know parental love. I gave birth to my son. How could I not love him? Why did you drop him on the ground and kill him? You should pay with your own life." The mother knew that she would not be able to get away. Quickly covering her face with the blanket, she said, "Do as you please." Yao Two raised the axe at his mother, who thought she was surely going to die. But everything remained quiet for a long period. Lifting the blanket, she did not see her son. But the boat was already back at the riverbank near the family residence. When she returned home, her daughter-in-law wept and said, "Just now, the sky was blue and cloudless. There suddenly was thunder. My husband was struck to death. His body was covered with axe wounds and large scars. I do not know why this has happened." The mother told the daughter-in-law of her son's doing. She did not hear the thunder. Nor did she notice whether the boat shook due to the thunder or how it sailed back. The family line subsequently ended.⁴⁵

Entitled "Retribution against the Unfilial Yao Two," the story was distinct in portraying Heaven's immediate action against an unfilial son, who attempted to

murder his mother in the most atrocious manner. Yao Two was not only struck to death by lightning, but his family line, just like that of Chen Fourteen's, was also cut short.⁴⁶ A similar destiny fell on Wang Thirty, the son who sold his mother's coffin three times:

Ten days after he buried his mother, he was struck to death by lightning. His body was left standing upside down. Someone ran to inform his son. Rushing to the site wailing, the son laid his body on the ground. It was midday. There was suddenly trembling thunder, which carried his son to a place about five *li* away. When the son returned, his father's body was standing upside down again. The son buried his father twice. Both times, the body was shaken out of the ground by thunder. Eventually, he had a hole cut in the coffin and covered it with bamboo.⁴⁷ Everything remained quiet after that.⁴⁸

For repeatedly profiting from his mother's quality coffin and burying her in a cheap box, Wang Thirty was condemned by Heaven. He and his family were subsequently humiliated publicly through several events. After he was killed by lightning, Wang Thirty's body stood upside down. Moreover, it took his son two attempts and a magic remedy, whose origin is unclear, before Wang Thirty was finally laid to rest. Note that Wang Thirty's son survived and the family descent line continued.

Not all unfilial children were executed by lightning. Their punishment was, nonetheless, severe. The man who sold the lumber meant for his mother's coffin survived a lightning strike. The left side of his body completely burned, but the other side remained normal.⁴⁹ Another man had a similar experience: After he was hit by lightning, he saw three ghosts wherever he went and was expected to share food with them.⁵⁰ The daughter-in-law who fed her mother-in-law feces was similarly struck by lightning. Although she did not die from the strike, her head was replaced with that of a dog. The local official even put a leash around her neck, using her to warn others against being unfilial.⁵¹

Those who were not struck by lightning nonetheless suffered greatly and punishments, with no exception, came swiftly, rather than occurring in the person's next life. Some met sudden deaths. A son who mistreated his mother, for example, suddenly went delirious and died from taking some poisonous liquid.⁵² The son who attempted to desert his mother while fleeing a natural disaster ended up being eaten by a tiger.⁵³ Others endured tremendous humiliation and became the laughingstock of their community. This included the man who ended up having to share food with three ghosts, the woman whose head was turned into that of a dog, and the daughter-in-law who suffered a strange and miserable illness. Here is what happened to the woman who fed her mother-in-law barley while she herself ate rice:

When the daughter-in-law returned, the monk went straight to her and asked for the rice. The woman became very angry and yelled at him. The monk begged even more. The woman bawled furiously and said, "Take off your kasaya. You can exchange it for the rice." The monk immediately took off the robe and gave it to the woman, who examined it closely and put it on herself playfully. At this time, the monk suddenly disappeared. The kasaya turned into cowhide and was too tight for her to get out of. First, a patch of hair grew on the daughter-in-law's chest. It then spread to her entire body. Her head turned into that of a cow. Her husband ran to tell her parents. By the time they came, she had completely turned into a cow. I do not know where she is now.⁵⁴

This story, along with many others discussed in this study, including those of Yao Two and the fisherman, depicted instant retribution meted out to unfilial children. Yao Two was struck to death by lightning as soon as he raised an axe at his mother. For refusing to share even one fish with his mother, the fisherman son not only witnessed all his harvest turning into snakes, he was also bitten to death by one of them.⁵⁵ Because she neglected and bullied her mother-in-law on a daily basis, the daughter-in-law was transformed into an animal, destroying her husband's family and embarrassing her own.

CONCLUSION

In their capacities as scholars, frequent travelers, and experienced local administrators, Song educated men served as keen observers of and prolific writers about diverse local conditions and social customs.⁵⁶ This development is seen clearly in the proliferation of official documents and private work on such "evil and vulgar" practices as infanticide, cremation, and illicit sexual relations among the general populace. Through essays, court memorials, legal judgments, and personal correspondence, these scholar-officials lamented the prevalence of immoral behavior and condemned commoner men and women for violating the most fundamental human relations. The popularity of *biji* writing, partially intended to reform society through upholding the virtuous and curbing the wicked, and its attention to unfilial behavior can be understood in this large context. Eager to articulate and establish proper hierarchies in the domestic sphere, Song *biji* writers continued to promulgate the deeds of filial children. But they also distinguished themselves from their predecessors by including a large number of unfilial stories in their work. For the first time in Chinese history, filial piety was promoted through the use of negative role models.

In representing women and, predominantly, men from the ordinary class as susceptible to violating fundamental social norms, Song unfilial tales shed much light on elite perceptions of ordinary family life and of the shifting balance of power in the household. Using harsh language and providing gruesome details,

biji authors featured the neglect, bullying, and even murder of parents, with the wrongdoers being prescribed severe punishment. While fathers were subjects of unfilial behavior, it was against mothers, often older widows, that sons committed the most vicious crimes. The same anecdotes also propagated the efficacy of speedy and certain retribution by a variety of unforgiving forces. Heaven played the most prominent role in delivering the final judgment, ranging from death and miserable diseases to public humiliation and the demise of descent lines.

It is hard to gauge the extent to which these stories were characteristic of the lives of the general populace, but the wide circulation of *biji* works helped perpetuate the image of the unfilial child in late imperial times. Compared to filial tales from the earlier times, Song unfilial stories and the severe punishments they prescribed for the miscreants revealed a sense of urgency on the part of the educated elite to reform minds and inculcate appropriate social values in commoner men and women. This attention to filiality in ordinary households ran parallel to and eventually coalesced with the Neo-Confucian articulation of ideal moral, familial, and social order, leading to unprecedented elite activism in standardizing behavior and establishing appropriate hierarchies in the family from the Song onward.⁵⁷

NOTES

1. *The Classic of Filial Piety* has been the focus of scholarly attention in all major languages. For a recent study and translation in English, see Rosemont and Ames, *The Classic of Family Reverence*. Unfiliality, along with rebellion, sedition, treason, depravity, great irreverence, and incest, was listed as one of the ten abominations in the legal code of all major dynasties. For a translation of a list of these crimes, see de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 549–552. Another way to approach the legal discourse on filial piety is to look at how avenging parents was adjudicated as a crime. Children who killed in defense of their parents and those involved in “filially-motivated homicide” often received leniency. For two detailed discussions, see Epstein, “Making a Case,” 27–43, and Buoye, “Filial Felons, 109–124.

2. Emerging in the Han period (202 BCE–220 CE), filial tales played an especially important role in the popularization of filial ideals in elite families. For an in-depth study on this subject, see Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*. Dynastic histories and local gazetteers routinely included the words and deeds of filial children. See Davis, “Chaste and Filial Women in Chinese Historical Writing of the Eleventh Century,” 204–218.

3. Wilt Idema’s study of the filial son Dong Yong and several precious Buddhist scrolls shows the immense popularity of these works among the general populace. See his *Personal Salvation and Filial Piety and Filial Piety and Its Divine Rewards*.

4. For earlier stories of unfilial children see Knapp, this volume.

5. Zhang, “To Be Erudite in ‘Miscellaneous Knowledge,’” 43–77.

6. For a major study, see Hinrichs, *The Medical Transforming of Governance and Southern Customs in Song Dynasty China (960–1279 C.E.)*. Also appearing in large numbers in Song *biji* were accounts of dissolute women, jealous spouses, and immoral Buddhist and Daoist monks. See Zhang, “Anecdotal Writing on Illicit Sex in Song China,” 255–282.

7. This change in elite filial practice in the Song, caused by frequent and large-scale geographical mobility required of office-holders' scholarly and official pursuits, is one of the focuses of my ongoing book project. Sons who did prioritize parents' physical well-being over official responsibilities were especially praised in their funerary inscriptions. For an example, see the multiple biographies of Bao Zheng (999–1062) collected in *Bao Zheng ji jiaozhu*, 265–290. Bao was lauded by all four biographers for temporarily retiring from government positions in order to stay home and care for his parents.

8. Inglis, "Hong Mai's Informants for the *Yi jian zhi*," 83–125.

9. For an exploration of the relationship between this emerging elite interest and *biji* writing in the Song, see Zhang, "To Be 'Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge,'" 43–77.

10. For two major studies on mourning in early and late imperial China, see Brown, *The Politics of Mourning in Early China*, and Kutcher, *Mourning in Late Imperial China*.

11. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine* and "Private Love and Public Duty," 79–110.

12. In the Song period, ordinary men were often given a number as their first name, an indication that their parents were illiterate.

13. Hong Mai, *Yi jian zhi* (hereafter *YJZ*), bing, 8.430–431.

14. For a few examples, see *YJZ*, ding, 19.700; sanzhi, ren, 5.1504; bujuan, 1.1553.

15. *YJZ*, bing, 13.474.

16. Peng Cheng, *Moke huixi*, 8.374–375.

17. Cheng Minsheng has recently estimated that a "middle-class" family in the Song was worth about one to several thousand strings of cash (a string was worth one thousand cash coins). Depending on its financial situation, a family could spend between one to one hundred strings of cash on a coffin. The cost of burial plots, tomb construction, and funeral procession could add another hundred strings of cash. For this reason, it took many families years to make arrangements for a funeral. It was therefore a common practice to have coffins prepared in advance. Cheng, *Songdai wujia*, 359–364, 454–465, 572–573.

18. *YJZ*, ding, 12.637.

19. *Ibid.*, jia, 8.71.

20. *Ibid.*, bujuan, 1.1556.

21. *Ibid.*, ding, 11.627–628.

22. *Ibid.*, zhijia, 9.784–785.

23. *Ibid.*, bujuan, 1.1556; Qian Yi, *Nanbu xinshu*, gui, 170.

24. *YJZ*, ding, 12.638.

25. Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, 3.101–102.

26. *Ibid.*, 10.448.

27. *Ibid.*, 8.367–368.

28. Interestingly, two accounts specifically feature a woman standing up to her husband due to his unfilial behavior, endowing the wife with great moral power. Both were rewarded by the local government. In the first story, when a son wanted to desert his mother during a flood, his wife insisted that they protect her. After the son deserted the mother, the daughter-in-law went back looking for the elderly woman. In the other case, when a son treated his mother badly and tried to suffocate her on the road, the daughter-in-law went back to look for the mother and was able to save her life. Hong Mai, *YJZ*, ding, 11.627–628; zhijia, 9.784. Neither story includes any information regarding the consequences of the antagonism between the husband and the wife. What they did imply was that sons and daughters-in-law might not always agree with each other when it came to the well-being of their aging parents.

This point is further supported by an anecdote regarding a filial son and an unfilial daughter-in-law. When the wife suggested to her husband that they murder the mother, instead of conspiring with his wife the husband threatened to kill her. Only then did the young woman realize the horrendous nature of her behavior. What makes this story especially interesting is the depiction of the differences in the couple's conduct, with the husband eventually transforming his wife into a moral person. He Yuan, *Chunzhu jiwen*, 4.63–64.

29. For recent studies on the mother-son relationship in earlier periods, see Brown, "Sons and Mothers in Warring States and Han China," 137–169; Lewis, "Mothers and Sons in Early Imperial China," 245–275.

30. Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*, 189.

31. *Ibid.*, 213.

32. For two important studies on father-son relationships and parental authority in the early medieval period, see Knapp, "Creeping Absolutism," 65–91, and "Sympathy and Severity," 113–136.

33. The vulnerable position of widows can also be confirmed by many legal cases involving family members, including sons, taking advantage of older women in property disputes. For some examples, see *Minggong shupan qingming ji*, 4.124–126, 4.126–127, 4.140–141, 4.294–295, 10.360, 10.362, 10.363–364, 10.383–384, 4.386.

34. Yuan Cai, *Yuanshi shifan* (*Siku zhenben* edition), 1.60. The translation is Patricia Ebrey's. See Ebrey, *Family and Property in Sung China*, 225–226.

35. Elsewhere, Yuan highlighted the importance of filial piety, especially in terms of sons obeying their fathers and the two parties developing a mutual understanding of each other's feelings. Ebrey, *Family and Property in Sung China*, 185–202.

36. *YJZ*, ding, 13.647.

37. *Ibid.*, zhiding, 1.975.

38. Seen from a different perspective, while strong distrust of the daughter-in-law continued, ordinary women were also shown to be capable of high moral courage. On a broader level, this was one of the self-claimed goals of *biji* writing, as authors routinely stated in the prefaces to their work the hope that their stories might elevate the virtuous and warn against the ignorant and the immoral.

39. Inglis, *Hong Mai's Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context*, 69–70.

40. *YJZ*, bujuan, 1.1552–1553; Zhou Mi, *Guixin zashi*, xu.209.

41. *YJZ*, yi, 2.198.

42. *Ibid.*, ding, 12.638.

43. *Ibid.*, bujuan, 1.1556.

44. One *li* was about one third of a mile.

45. *YJZ*, ding, 9.615–616.

46. *Ibid.*

47. I have not been able to find an explanation for this practice. Presumably, it was intended to show that Wang Thirty did not get a dignified burial.

48. *YJZ*, jia, 8.71.

49. *Ibid.*, ding, 12.637–638.

50. *Ibid.*, zhijia, 9.784–785.

51. Qian Yi, *Nanbu xinshu*, gui, 170.

52. Hong Mai, *YJZ*, yi, 7.242.

53. Ibid., ding, 11.627–628.
54. Ibid., bing, 8.430–431.
55. Ibid., bing, 13.474.
56. Zhang, *Transformative Journeys*.
57. For a comprehensive treatment of the origin and development of this large intellectual movement, see Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*.

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COPULATING WITH ONE'S STEPMOTHER—OR BIRTH MOTHER?

PAUL R. GOLDIN

In a brief but highly influential study, Sir Keith Thomas limned the significance of jokes and laughter for the study of cultural history: “to study the laughter of our ancestors, to go on reading until we can hear the people not just talking but also laughing is to gain some insight into changing human sensibilities.”¹ Anyone who has spent time in a different culture has had the bewildering experience of hearing someone say something that was obviously funny—because everyone else immediately burst out laughing—but failing to catch the joke. Historians, especially those who specialize in distant times and places, face something akin to this bewildering experience every time they open a primary source and discover a cultural feature that does not seem straightforwardly explicable by today’s standards and conventions. Cultural historians are thus always interested in strange or incongruous details, however minor, because they could prove to be entryways to understanding whole paradigms that differ from one’s own. Oddities like the Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin² or those Roman jokes that just do not seem funny today³ have revealed aspects of past cultures that might not have been noticed by cleaving to the master narrative.

In the field of early China, one such oddity is *zheng* 蒸, or copulating with a deceased father’s concubine.⁴ Not surprisingly, copulating with a deceased father’s concubine does not appear in any of today’s various lists of paraphilias, including the relatively short list in the current (fifth) edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*.⁵ Certain social structures, notably institutionalized polygyny, must be in place before one can even have a concept of copulating with a deceased father’s concubine, and therefore the very existence of the word tells us immediately that we are dealing with a culturally specific form of perversion. The presence and absence of words in a language impart information about the concerns of its speakers, not because language determines thought in any simplistic manner, but because people naturally invent words for the things they need to talk about. The latest research

indicates that there really are many Inuit words for “snow,”⁶ even if this cliché was once sternly challenged. It is a safe bet that Proto-Austronesian, which was spoken on the island that we now call Taiwan,⁷ did not have dozens of words for “snow.”

The most lurid records of *zheng* are found in the *Zuo Commentary to the Springs and Autumns* (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳), the longest of the three canonical commentaries to the chronicle known as *Springs and Autumns* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), which covers affairs in Lu 魯 from 722 to 481 BCE (the *Zuo Commentary* carries the narrative down to 468 BCE).⁸ Although the text does not state the principle explicitly, its narratives convey that offspring born of *zheng*, like those of other incestuous or adulterous unions, tend not to have a happy end. When it occurs in the sovereign's palace—and a disproportionate number of records pertain to the palace, since the *Zuo Commentary* is concerned with affairs of state—*zheng* can have the added consequence of disrupting dynastic succession.⁹ A case in point is the story of Lord Xuan of Wei 衛宣公 (r. 718–700 BCE):

Before [coming to the throne], Lord Xuan of Wei 衛宣公 committed *zheng* with Jiang of Yi 夷姜 [his father's concubine]. She gave birth to Jizi 急子, whom [Lord Xuan] entrusted to the Right Prince.¹⁰ [Lord Xuan] found [Jizi] a wife from Qi 齊, but since she was beautiful, Lord [Xuan] took her [for himself]. She gave birth to Shou 壽 and Shuo 朔. [Lord Xuan] entrusted Shou to the Left Prince. Jiang of Yi hanged herself. When Xuan's other wife and Prince Shuo slandered Jizi, Lord [Xuan] sent him to Qi, and sent thugs to wait for him at Xin 莘, where they were to kill him. Shouzi informed [Jizi], and told him to flee. [Jizi] refused, saying, “If I reject my father's command, of what use am I as a son? If there were such a thing as a state without a father, it would be acceptable.” When it came time to go, [Shouzi] intoxicated [Jizi] with wine. Shouzi went ahead of him, carrying his banner, and the thugs killed him.

When Jizi arrived, he said, “It is I whom you seek; what was his crime? I beg you to kill me!” They killed him too.¹¹

Lord Xuan's disorderly sexual relations stand in stark contrast to the scruples of the three members of the household who either kill themselves or engineer their own deaths: Jiang of Yi, presumably out of shame; Jizi, because he is unwilling to continue living when his father wishes him to die; and Shouzi, because he vainly hopes that he can spare his half-brother's life by sacrificing his own.¹² Years after Lord Xuan commits the supremely unfilial act of appropriating his father's concubine, Jizi, the son born of that union, displays true filial conduct, but in the most tragic mode possible.

Classical readers would have inferred another grave lesson: the succession in Wei has been severely compromised, because the sole surviving son is culpable

for the deaths of the other two. When Lord Xuan dies in 700, Shuo succeeds him (with the posthumous title Lord Hui 惠公), but is soon deposed by the Left and Right Princes, who bore responsibility for Shouzi and Jizi, respectively.¹³

The two Princes thus resented Lord Hui. In the eleventh month, Left Prince Xie 洩 and Right Prince Zhi 職 installed Prince Qianmou 黔牟 [as Lord of Wei]. Lord Hui fled to Qi.¹⁴

Lord Hui remained in exile for eight years until he was finally restored in 688. One of his first acts upon returning to Wei was to put the Left and Right Princes to death.¹⁵ All this bloodshed, we are given to understand, sprang from Lord Xuan's transgressive sexual relations across generational lines: first copulating with his father's concubine, and then marrying the woman originally intended for his son.

In commenting on this affair, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145?–86? BCE) linked it to another famous story from antiquity:

When I read the words of the hereditary houses, I come to the part where Lord Xuan's Crown Prince was put to death on account of a woman, and his younger brother Shou promoted his own death by trying to take his place. This [example] is like that of Crown Prince Shensheng of Jin 晉太子申生 [d. 656 BCE], who dared not bring to light the misdeeds of Lady Li 驪姬. Both [Jizi and Shensheng] hated to violate their father's will, and thus ultimately perished. How poignant! Sometimes fathers and sons kill one another and brothers exterminate one another. Why indeed?¹⁶

It cannot be a coincidence that the hapless Crown Prince Shensheng—whose name literally means Born Again¹⁷—was also a product of *zheng*. We cannot say what version of the *Zuo Commentary*, if any, Sima Qian had before him,¹⁸ but he does seem to have absorbed the lesson that *zheng* generates ill-starred children. Shensheng's father, Lord Xian of Jin 晉獻公 (r. 676–651 BCE), had congress with Jiang of Qi 齊姜, his own father's concubine; although this could hardly have been regarded as proper, Shensheng was still installed as the legitimate Crown Prince. Lord Xian, who had several other sons by wives and concubines, later had a change of heart and wished to elevate Lady Li, one of his concubines, to the rank of legitimate wife and name their young son, Xiqi 奚齊 (r. 651 BCE), as Crown Prince instead of Shensheng.¹⁹ Seizing the opportunity, Lady Li framed Shensheng for attempting to poison Lord Xian, and although Shensheng saw through the plot, he perceived that his father was disinclined to investigate who was really at fault, and therefore committed suicide.²⁰

One can only suspect that Shensheng's peculiar name has something to do with the next scene, in which he appears as a revenant after Yiwu 夷吾 (i.e., Lord

Hui of Jin 晉惠公, r. 650–637 BCE), one of his half-brothers, has him gratuitously disinterred and reburied elsewhere. The meaning of Yiwu's own name, Destroy Me, leaves little doubt as to his fate.

The Marquis of Jin [i.e., Yiwu] moved the tomb of Crown Prince Gong 共太子 [i.e., Shensheng]. In the autumn, Hu Tu 狐突 [Shensheng's former subordinate], was going to the lesser capital, when he happened upon [the ghost of] the Crown Prince. The Crown Prince made him climb into [his carriage] and act as his charioteer. He said to him: "Yiwu has no propriety. I have made a request of the Thearch: I will bestow Jin unto Qin 秦, and Qin will cultivate me."

[Hu Tu] replied: "I have heard, 'Spirits do not consume what is not of their kind; people do not cultivate what is not of their lineage.' Will sacrifices to you not be vain? Moreover, the people are without guilt; you will be punishing them wrongfully and nullifying their sacrifices. Lord, please reconsider this."

Lord [Gong] said: "Very well, I shall make another request. In seven days, there will be a shaman on the western side of the New City; you will have an audience with me through him." [Hu Tu] assented to this, and [the ghost] disappeared. When he went [to the shaman] at the appointed time, he was told: "The Thearch has assented to my punishing the guilty one. He will be wracked at Han 韓."²¹

The ghost thus presages the famed Battle of Han (645 BCE), where Yiwu is ignominiously defeated by Qin. One telling detail in the litany of misdeeds justifying Qin's attack is that Yiwu was asked to shelter a certain Lady Jia 賈君, but, far from living up to this obligation, committed *zheng* with her instead. The verb *zheng* might lead one to believe that Lady Jia was another one of Lord Xian's concubines, but some commentators state that she was Shensheng's widow, and *zheng* is applied in an extended sense.²² More commonly, copulating with a brother's or uncle's concubine is called *bao* 報 rather than *zheng*,²³ but in this case, because Shensheng was formerly the Crown Prince (and Yiwu added the outrage of violating his grave), the act might have been considered as egregious as *zheng*. Yiwu's shameful defeat at the Battle of Han is represented as due requital for his shameful conduct beforehand.

Zheng highlighted the precarious status of concubines, who lay somewhere between wives and chattel. On the one hand, a son who inherited his father's estate may have looked forward to taking possession of the concubines as well; on the other hand, because of their personal relationship with the father, they were not quite like furniture or horses, which the son could have used or sold as he wished. Suspended like this between recognition and nonrecognition, freedom and unfreedom, a concubine would have had little hope of resisting an abusive new master. Accordingly, the matter of consent never arises in these

narratives; a concubine was simply not free to grant or withhold it—though the actions of Jiang of Yi leave no doubt that she was an unwilling participant.

In later times, *zheng* was unquestionably criminal (if inconsistently prosecuted),²⁴ but in the world depicted by the *Zuo Commentary*, the legality is hazy. No one is ever punished explicitly for having committed *zheng*; at best, the text shows indirectly, as in the examples above, that *zheng* has disastrous consequences in the long run (though often for the victims and progeny rather than the reckless perpetrator himself). Moreover, attentive classical readers may have noticed that the narratives involving *zheng* appear relatively early in the chronicle.²⁵ Perhaps one is supposed to infer that it was an archaic and barbarous custom, which more civilized generations ceased to practice.

Western Han (206 BCE—9 CE) princes were often accused of *zheng*, but, as I have argued elsewhere, it was typically a pretext, and perhaps an invented one, for the central government to eliminate them and seize their lands. One reason why so many members of the imperial house are depicted as sex fiends is that it was easier to discredit a sex fiend than a dignified lord who might one day become a credible pretender to the throne. *Zheng* must have been one of the most revolting and unfilial crimes for which one could plausibly indict a prince. Liu Jian 劉建, Prince of Jiangdu 江都王 (r. 127–121 BCE), who had a particular reputation for debauchery, was accused of having committed *zheng* in the mourning lodge while his father's corpse lay unburied. He was soon forced to commit suicide.²⁶

In none of these cases was the female the birth mother (*qinmu* 親母) of the male; usually, she was a concubine of the male's father, sometimes a stepmother (*jimu* 繼母 or *houmu* 後母), and therefore possibly closer in age to the son.²⁷ But it did not take long for literati to imagine that especially depraved souls copulated with their birth mothers as well.²⁸ Consider this fragment from a lost text called *Handling the Cithern* (*Qincao* 琴操):²⁹

Wang Zhaojun 王昭君 [b. ca. 50 BCE] was the daughter of Wang Rang 王穰 of Qi. At the age of seventeen *sui*, her body and deportment were exceedingly beautiful, and she was known throughout the realm for her chastity. Various dignitaries sought her [hand], but Wang [Rang] would not permit it; instead, he presented her to Emperor Yuan of Han 漢元帝 [r. 48–33 BCE]. The Emperor was inattentive and could not distinguish among his “bedchamber curtains” [i.e., members of his harem]. Zhaojun was shamed and angered by this.

It came to pass that the *chanyu* 單于 [i.e., Huhanye 呼韓邪, r. 58–31 BCE] sent an emissary [to court]. The Emperor ordered the palace ladies to adorn themselves and come out for the emissary to select one of them. The Emperor said to them: “Whoever wishes to go to the *chanyu* should rise.” Zhaojun drew a long breath and arose from her mat. When the

Emperor looked at her, he was astonished and regretful, but by this time the emissary had also seen her and could not be forestalled, so she was granted to the *chanyu*. The *chanyu* took delight in her and gave her many precious objects.

Zhaojun had a son named Shiwei 世違. When the *chanyu* died, Shiwei succeeded him. Among the Hu 胡, when the father dies, the son takes his mother as his wife. Zhaojun asked Shiwei: "Are you going to be a Han? Or are you going to be a Hu?"

Shiwei said: "I wish to be a Hu." Thereupon Zhaojun killed herself by swallowing poison.³⁰

Many details in this fantastic story need to be unpacked. Huhanye, the *chanyu*³¹ or chief of the Xiongnu 匈奴 confederacy,³² requested aid from the Han government as he fended off rivals on the steppe,³³ and a gift of an imperial concubine—once again, they are treated like wives in some respects and chattel in others—was supposed to cement the happy alliance. Instead, the emperor regrets his "inattentiveness" as he finally appreciates Wang Zhaojun's beauty just as he must bid her farewell. Perhaps this much was true.³⁴

The rest of the tale, however, is pure fiction. The Xiongnu are called Hu, literally "bearded"—a sign of their uncouthness. According to Chinese sources, their custom was indeed for sons to inherit their father's concubines,³⁵ but not their birth mothers. Thus *zheng*, or practices like it, might have been a general Eurasian cultural feature,³⁶ which was retained by groups such as the Xiongnu, but reviled as barbaric in the highly self-regarding Chinese empire. At any rate, Wang Zhaojun's son did not become the next *chanyu* and she was not obliged to marry her own son. We know from more credible sources that Huhanye was succeeded by his eldest son, by a different wife. This son then wished to follow the Xiongnu custom and marry Wang Zhaojun, who was, of course, unrelated to him, and clearly something of a trophy. She petitioned the Chinese court to return home, but was told to stay and obey. Far from swallowing poison, she did as she was bidden, and bore her new husband two daughters.³⁷

In fact, Wang Zhaojun's son could not have become the next *chanyu* or intended to marry his mother because he would have been scarcely more than two years old. Impossible chronologies are a hallmark of inventive Chinese anecdotes that are more interested in the moral dynamics of a scene than the historical accuracy of its details.³⁸ Even the name Shiwei is dubious. Like Shensheng and Yiwu, it has an irrepressible meaning: "The Generation Is Deviant," as any Chinese reader would have recognized. Nor can I find any references to Shiwei in other documents. Wang Zhaojun did have a son by Huhanye, but his name was Yituzhiyashi 伊屠智知師 (Old Chinese *ʔij-d'a-tre(s)-mɣ'ra-srij), which really must have been a Xiongnu name, because it makes no sense in Chinese. One can only suspect that Shiwei was invented, and if Chinese readers did not

object to such licenses, it was because Shiwei behaves precisely as they imagined a barbarian would. Obviously barbarians copulate with their mothers. Why wouldn't they?

Even the venerable legends were not immune to subversion. But first, some background: polygyny was enshrined in myth. The Sage King Yao 堯, we read, was so impressed by the commoner Shun 舜 that, rather than bequeathing the throne to his son, he abdicated in favor of Shun, and also made him a son-in-law by bestowing two daughters on him, Ehuang 娥皇 (August Woman) and Nüying 女英 (Brilliant Girl). Why did Yao esteem Shun so highly? To the extent that the surviving scraps of information can be pieced together³⁹—by their nature, myths appear, in Chinese as in Greek literature, in the form of allusions rather than comprehensive narrations⁴⁰—Shun's extraordinary achievement seems to be that he endured the schemes of his invidious family without losing his moral bearings. Shun's father, Gusou 瞽叟/瞽 (Blind Old Man), remarried after the death of Shun's mother,⁴¹ and the unnamed stepmother wished to have her own son, Xiang 象 (Elephant), installed as the Blind Old Man's heir.⁴² (As we have seen, concubines and stepmothers in Chinese literature often scheme on behalf of their natural sons.)⁴³ They unleash various plots and booby traps, but Shun always manages to escape while maintaining filial and fraternal devotion, as in *Mencius* 5A.2:

His parents sent Shun to repair a silo; they removed the ladder, and Blind Old Man set fire to the silo. They sent him to dredge a well; they went ahead and shut it, [not knowing that] he had already gotten out. Elephant said: "The merit for the schemes against the 'City-Constructing Lord' [i.e., Shun] is all mine. His oxen and sheep will go to my parents; his storehouse and silos will go to my parents; but his shield and spear will be mine; his zither will be mine; his bow will be mine; and his two wives will be made to manage my household." Elephant went to Shun's residence. Shun was on the bed, playing his zither. Elephant said: "I have been anxiously longing for you, my lord." He was sheepish.⁴⁴

Shun is aware that the dissembling Elephant intended to kill him (and then commit *bao* with his wives), but, unperturbed, he asks Elephant to join him in government: "These are all my ministers—may you manage them for me." Yao must have reasoned that someone who can still cherish his family in the teeth of such offenses is a prime candidate for the throne. Moreover, Shun is indirectly praised for shaming Elephant into *not* killing him. Shun's patience is not that of a dolt or coward; rather, it is the best means to make his family reflect on their conduct and desist from committing further crimes.

Literati adored every aspect of this legend, including the polygyny. Surely, if anybody deserves to have two wives, it is a Confucian paragon like Shun. Thus it must have stung when Han Fei 韓非 (d. 233 BCE), one of the most out-

spoken anti-Confucians in history, alleged that, after coming to the throne, Shun “turned his mother into his concubine” (*qie qi mu* 妾其母):⁴⁵

Outside [the home], this Shun turned his lord into his servant. Inside [the home], he turned his father into his servant and his mother into his concubine; he married his master's daughters. Thus, renowned adventurers do not run their families [properly] within [the home]; they bring disorder to generations and cut off their own progeny. Outside [the home], they presume upon their lord.⁴⁶

For a staunch dynast like Han Fei, the legend of Shun represents a distressing precedent because it offers adventurers the hope that, by ingratiating themselves with their lord and feigning outstanding virtue, they might usurp privileges to which they have no proper claim.⁴⁷ The fact that Shun's father and former sovereign were both alive during his reign is a telling embarrassment, for such a situation is not supposed to arise in a hereditary monarchy. Reigning kings typically do not have living fathers. This is what is meant by the statement that Shun turned his lord and his father into his servants.

But the charge that he turned his mother into his concubine is harder to explain, because many reigning kings did have living mothers. First, it is impossible to judge whether *mu* refers to Shun's mother or stepmother. In one version of the legend, we recall, Shun's birth mother died when he was young, and his chief enemy was his stepmother. If Han Fei expected his audience to know this tradition, then the accusation, strictly speaking, is that Shun committed *zheng*. Significantly, however, the text does not say this; it says that he turned his mother into his concubine.

Some commentators opine that *qie* need not connote a sexual relationship, and can refer generally to a female servant.⁴⁸ Western scholars are divided on the matter,⁴⁹ but it seems obvious that ancient readers would have had to entertain the possibility that Han Fei might be accusing Shun of illicit congress with his mother. Han Fei was one of the most colorful writers of his period, and was especially fond of witticisms involving sex.⁵⁰ Considering that the charge appears in a chapter entitled “Loyalty and Filial Piety” (“Zhongxiao” 忠孝), we must take it as a bitter attack on Confucian moralists. They may prate about loyalty and filial piety, but they are hypocrites: their patron saint turned his own mother into his whore. There may also be a subtler argument lying underneath: since Shun did not really exist, one can hardly prove that he did not sleep with his mother. As long as we are inventing culture heroes, we can invent whatever details we wish.

One point evinced by the above array of examples is that the commonplace of copulating with one's mother—whether a stepmother or one's birth mother—was deployed as a token of barbarism.⁵¹ Within the Chinese cultural sphere, it was used to distinguish rulers who know how to control their urges from those whose dissipation knows no bounds, and also to distinguish proper

Chinese mores from those of benighted barbarians. If barbarians who copulate with their mothers cannot, in fact, be found, the remedy is easy: just make them up. The same goes for culture heroes like Shun. If this all seems alien and peculiar, remember that we usually do not have supporting evidence when we call someone a motherfucker.⁵² And yet we say it.

NOTES

1. Thomas, "The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England," 77–81.
2. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*.
3. For a fine recent study, see Beard, *Laughter in Ancient Rome*.
4. The etymology is unknown and is not broached in Schuessler's magnificent *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*. Lin Yutang (1895–1976), *Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage*, s.v., proposed: "probably from 蒸 heat goes up" (because *zheng* 蒸 can mean "to steam" or "to braise"). But other meanings of *zheng* 蒸 include "many" and "to offer," so perhaps the word means "to multiply" or "an offering."
5. Bering, *Perv: The Sexual Deviant in All of Us*, 110ff., explains that most (zoophilia, necrophilia, etc.) are simply subsumed under the capacious but analytically useless *DSM-5* category of "paraphilia not otherwise specified."
6. E.g., Krupnik and Müller-Wille, "Franz Boas and Inuktitut Terminology for Ice and Snow," 377–400. In literature, one of the best-known applications of the "Eskimos know their snow" commonplace is Peter Høeg's *Froken Smillas fornemmelse for sne*, released in English as *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. It was also made into a motion picture.
7. Cf. Melton et al., "Genetic Evidence for the Proto-Austronesian Homeland in Asia," 1807–1823.
8. The most judicious discussion of the date of the *Zuo Commentary* is Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 33–59.
9. Cf. Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*, 26ff.
10. Nothing more is known about the Left and Right Princes (other than their names, revealed below), but one can infer from their titles, *gongzi* 公子, that their father(s) held the rank of *gong*, and thus they were uncles or brothers of the present lord.
11. Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, vol. 1, 146 (Huan 桓 16=696 BCE). Compare the translations in Watson, *The Tso chuan*, 13ff., and Legge (1815–1897), *The Chinese Classics*, 5:66ff.
12. It is ironic that the names Jizi and Shouzi mean Endangered and Long-Lived, respectively. On meaningful names in early Chinese texts, see Goldin, *After Confucius*, 6–11. I confess that, since writing this piece, I find meaningful names virtually everywhere (including below).
13. Cf. Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 251n2.
14. Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1:147. Compare the translation in Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 5:67.
15. Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1:168 (Zhuang 莊 6=688 BCE).
16. Sima Qian, *Shiji* 史記, 37.1605 ("Wei Kangshu shijia" 衛康叔世家). Compare the translations by Scott Cook in Nienhauser, *The Grand Scribe's Records*, 1:261ff.; and Watson, *The Tso chuan*, 15.
17. I owe this insight to Jens Østergaard Petersen (private correspondence). The name could also mean "born of a woman of the Shen lineage"; cf. Zhang Yachu 張亞初, "Xi-Zhou

mingwen suojian mou sheng kao.” I am indebted to Edward L. Shaughnessy for this reference. Thomas Emmrich, *Tabu und Meidung im antiken China*, 19, suggested Born in Shen.

18. For a classic study of this question, see Jin Dejian, *Sima Qian suo jian shu kao*, 105–111 and 116–121; also Gu Lisan, *Sima Qian zhuanxie Shiji caiyong Zuo zhuan de yanjiu*.

19. Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1:238ff. (Zhuang 28=666 BCE). Incidentally, in *A Patterned Past*, David Schaberg writes that Lady Li's ethnicity was Di 狄, but the text states that she was from “the Kingdom of Li-Rong” 驪戎國 (151).

20. Ibid., 1:296ff. (Xi 僖 4=656 BCE). Cf. Li, 250ff. Lady Li's plot also appears in *Guoyu* 國語; see Xu Yuangao (1876–1955), *Guoyu jijie*, 7:264–267 (“Jinyu yi” 晉語一).

21. Ibid., 1:334f. (Xi 10=650 BCE). Compare the translations in Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 166–167; Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought*, 73; and Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 5:157.

22. See Zouzhuan, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1:351ff. (Xi 15=645 BCE), with Yang Bojun's comments regarding the identity of Lady Jia.

23. As in phrases like *baosao* 報嫂, “to marry one's elder brother's widow.” I cannot find any pre-Han usages of *bao* in this sense, however, so the distinction between *zheng* and *bao* might be anachronistic for the *Zuozhuan*. This sexual sense of *bao* might be explained by the basic etymon of “requital.”

24. Cf. Zhang Shuyi, “Zhangjiashan Hanjian suojian Handai hunyin jinling,” 5:11–12. For a discussion of cases regarding corrupt officials in the Zhangjiashan strips, see Barbieri-Low, this volume.

25. The only other instances of *zheng* (in the sexual sense) in the *Zuo Commentary* are Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1:266 (Min 閔 2=660 BCE) and 2:804 (Cheng 成 2=589 BCE). In other words, there is not a single case in the entire second half of the text.

26. See Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*, 88ff.

27. For a study of various types of maternal relationships in a slightly later period, see Zheng Yaru 鄭雅如, *Qinggan yu zhidu*. I am indebted to Debby Huang for this reference.

28. The following section is expanded from Goldin, “Steppe Nomads as a Philosophical Problem in Classical China,” 230.

29. On the authorship of *Qincao*, see Ma Meng, “*Qincao* zhuanzhe kaobian,” 61–66. It seems likely that there was more than one text by that name in antiquity, and sorting out which fragment belongs to which author may well be impossible with our limited knowledge today. An author of one text called *Qincao* was the famed Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–192 CE).

30. The text is related in the commentary of Liu Jun 劉峻 (462–512 CE) to *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語. See Yu Jiaxi, *Shishuo xinyu jianshu*, 19:665 (“Xianyuan” 賢媛). Compare the translation in Mather, *Shih-shuo hsün-yü*, 364. The story is discussed in Tao Ketao, *Zhanxiang chungqiu—Xiongnu pian*, 208ff.; and Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies*, 181–201.

31. The likeliest explanation of this title is still Pulleyblank, “The Consonantal System of Old Chinese (II),” 256–257, where it is associated with the later steppe titles *targan*, *tarxan*, and so on. See also Psarras, “Han and Xiongnu,” 128. According to the system in Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*, *chanyu* would have been *dar-ŋʷa in Old Chinese.

32. For some thoughts on the origin of this name, see Atwood, “The Qai, the Khongai, and the Names of the Xiōngnú,” 34–63.

33. See, e.g., Chen Xujing, *Xiongnu shi gao*, 307–317.

34. For a comprehensive account of Wang Zhaojun's life and her role in later literature, see Cui Mingde, *Zhongguo gudai heqin tongshi*, 79–99.

35. According to a lost geographical text called *The Register Encompassing All the Lands* (*Kuodi pu* 括地譜), the progenitor of the Xiongnu was Xunyu 獯粥, the son of the tyrant Jie 桀 (the last ruler of the Xia 夏 dynasty), who married one of his deceased father's concubines. Thus *zheng* was in their very blood. See the commentary by Sima Zhen 司馬貞 (ca. 656–720) in *Shiji* 110.2880n1 (“Xiongnu liezhuan” 匈奴列傳).

36. Cf. Jennifer Holmgren, “Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices in Early Mongol and Yüan Society,” 155.

37. See “Xiongnu zhuan” 匈奴傳, *Hanshu*, 94B.3807; and “Nan Xiongnu liezhuan” 南匈奴列傳, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965), 89.2941.

38. Cf. Goldin, “Appeals to History in Early Chinese Philosophy and Rhetoric,” 79–96.

39. The extant sources are conveniently assembled and translated in Birrell, *Chinese Mythology*, 74–76.

40. Cf. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths*, 14.

41. This crucial detail appears in *Shiji* 1.32 (“Wudi benji” 五帝本紀). Whalen Lai, “Unmasking the Filial Sage-King Shun,” 167 and 178f., writes that Shun's *father* is sometimes taken to be a stepparent, but provides no references, and I know of no evidence for such a tradition.

42. All the personal names in the myth are meaningful, but the significance of Elephant eludes me. Gusou could mean Blind Old Man or simply Blind One, depending on whether it is construed as 瞽叟 or 瞽瞍. Yao means Lofty. It would be tempting to associate Shun (Old Chinese *stun/rs) with *shun* 順, “docile” (Old Chinese *Cə.luns), but a phonological connection is hard to establish. Homophones of the sage's name include *shun* 薔/樺 (hibiscus) and *shun* 瞬 (to blink). I am indebted to my colleague Adam Smith, who has shown me his unpublished work on the name Shun.

43. It was enough of a concern that there is a relevant commandment in *Mencius* 6B.7 (attributed to Lord Huan of Qi 齊桓公, r. 685–643 BCE): “Execute the unfilial; do not change the [Crown] Prince once he has been established; do not turn a concubine into a wife” 誅不孝，無易樹子，無以妾為妻. Compare Chen Li (1809–1869), *Gongyang yishu*, 29.11a–12a (Xi 3=657 BCE).

44. Jiao Xun (1763–1820), *Mengzi zhengyi*, 19:619–622. Compare the translations in Lau, *Mencius*, 195ff.; and Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:346ff.

45. The following discussion is expanded from Goldin, “Appeals to History in Chinese Philosophy and Rhetoric,” 89.

46. Chen Qiyu, *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu*, 20.51.1154 (“Zhongxiao” 忠孝). Compare the translation in Liao, *The Complete Works of Han Fei tzu*, 2:314ff. The significance of this passage has been largely unappreciated; it is not discussed, for example, in Allan, *The Heir and the Sage*, 136–139.

47. Cf. Pines, “Submerged by Absolute Power,” 73.

48. See the opinions in Chen Qiyu, *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu*, 20.51.1156n14.

49. See the references in Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*, 169n66.

50. Consider Chen Qiyu, *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu*, 10.31.624f. (“Nei chushuo xia” 內儲說下), where an adulterous wife hoodwinks her credulous husband, and, for good measure, persuades him to bathe in excrement. The story is discussed in Harper, “Warring States, Qin, and Han Manuscripts Related to Natural Philosophy and the Occult,” 246.

51. For a medieval tale of an unfilial son sleeping with his birth mother, see Knapp, this volume.

52. Incidentally, it is far from certain that this word originally referred to incest, and it is still worth citing Eldridge Cleaver's comment, as quoted in Bobby Seale's *Seize the Time*: "I've seen and heard brothers use the word four and five times in one sentence and each time the word had a *different* meaning and expression" (408; emphasis in original). Seale's own theory: "Motherfucker actually comes from the old slave system and was a reference to the slave master who raped our mothers." A "(bad) motherfucker" was someone who slept with other people's mothers, not his own.

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INTRANSIGENT AND CORRUPT OFFICIALS IN EARLY IMPERIAL CHINA

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Xin, you are a senior official. You oversee an entire county. You are someone whom the emperor trusts and relies on. You were not careful in managing affairs by upholding the law.¹

So begins the cross-examination of Magistrate Xin 信 of Xinqi 新鄴 County during his trial in the summer of 201 BCE, only eighteen months after the precarious founding of the Han Empire. Magistrate Xin was charged with a gross abuse of power, for he had ordered the murder of one of his own subordinate officials over a petty affront to his prestige and then tried to cover up the crime. His actions provide the most outrageous example of a widespread and deeply ingrained problem within the early-Han bureaucracy, and that of the Qin dynasty before it, intransigent and corrupt officials who acted for their own personal or family advantage and not for the good of the state or the common people.

Official corruption is not unique to early imperial China, for it can be said to be a universal phenomenon that manifests itself in every bureaucratic society, going back to the earliest states in Mesopotamia and Egypt.² In the bureaucratic parlance from a document of maxims found in tomb no. 11 at the Qin site of Shuihudi 睡虎地, and in that of the statutes and case records found in the Han-period tomb no. 247 at Zhangjiashan 張家山, a corrupt official is described as *bu zhi* 不直 (not upright) and *bu lian* 不廉 or *bu lianjie* 不廉潔 (not pure and clean).³ These metaphors are remarkably close to our English words “crooked” and “corrupt.” By definition, official corruption entails the use of government resources or powers for private enrichment or empowerment. However, in the following discussion, I also include official intransigence, the intentional or negligent failure to perform one’s assigned duties or to uphold the policies or laws of the state, a pattern of behavior that deeply frustrated political leaders in early imperial China and was just as damaging to the state enterprise as regular corruption.

The official histories that have come down to us from the Han period contain ample references to incompetent, corrupt, or wicked officials, but the exact details of the cases are usually lacking. Now, thanks to the Qin and early Han period statutes, ordinances, and legal case records found in Zhangjiashan tomb no. 247, we can observe a much richer picture of the extent and nature of official intransigence and corruption at the beginning of the imperial period.

In general, Qin and early Han officials appear to have been a corrupt and unruly bunch, often resisting the state's attempts to contain them in a bureaucratic box and keep them focused on public benefit rather than their own private gain. The early Han period cases in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* (*Zouyan shu* 奏讞書) text found at Zhangjiashan provide vivid illustrations of this critical problem, for they are filled with tales of official corruption, from minor diversions of state labor, to theft of state resources, to Magistrate Xin's premeditated murder and obstruction of justice.

Rather than look upon intransigence and corruption by officials as merely negligent or criminal behavior, we might more productively view them as forms of resistance against the state. It was not only peasants and stigmatized groups that mounted overt or covert campaigns of resistance against the impositions and exactions of the state, for officials were also independent actors with their own desires and agendas that were not necessarily in line with those of the state. Collectively, officials were the government, but, individually, each was a human being with his own distinct agency. Officials also maintained loyalties to family, lineage, and other corporate groups that were sometimes at odds with their duty to the state. Some also might have harbored loyalty to a previous regime in the area and sought to undermine the success of the conquering regime.

As subjects of the ruling authority (or "citizens" in the case of modern societies), officials fall under the operation of the same two tools used by the state to ensure the compliance of the remainder of the population, coercion and ideology.⁴ While the state certainly employed coercive regulations and punishments to restrain corruption among officials, the most effective long-term remedy was for the state to convince the bureaucracy with the ideological tools at its disposal of the legitimacy and importance of its mission and to encourage officials to voluntarily support the program, working toward the goals of the state and not toward their own personal advantage.

FORMS OF OFFICIAL INTRANSIGENCE DURING THE QIN AND HAN

The Qin and Han empires attempted to implement an enormous, intricate state enterprise, and for this they required tens of thousands of cooperative and competent officials. In the ideal Legalist framework envisioned by the Qin state and its Han successor, each bureaucratic office corresponded precisely with a concrete set of duties and a well-defined jurisdiction, nested into a perfect hierarchy of subordination and oversight. This vision matches the definition of a

fully rationalized “modern” bureaucracy formulated by Max Weber,⁵ and is also in line with the philosophy of Han Fei 韓非 (d. 233 BCE), who argued that each official must have precise duties and should be punished both for not performing his assigned task and for overstepping the bounds of his position.⁶ This ideal rationalization is neatly summarized by a law from Zhangjiashan tomb no. 247:

Each office is to have its own different [responsibilities]. What is not its office business, it is not to dare to do it. What it should not listen to (e.g., denunciations, complaints), it is not to dare to listen to it.⁷

Such a rule had to be written out explicitly, because those officials in power probably demonstrated a tendency to meddle in the affairs of other offices or to overstep the bounds of their assigned duties. The Qin and Han laws also clearly defined which offices were allowed to try legal cases, which officials could act as judges, which officials were allowed to seal important documents or archives, and which junior officials could fill in for their superiors.

An egregious form of official intransigence during the Qin and Han periods involves officials who simply refuse to take up their positions when they are commissioned or to relinquish their posts when they are dismissed or transferred. A statute from Zhangjiashan declares:

or when one has official government affairs in a county or march and is dismissed or excluded from office, or when one's [official] affairs have been completed, then the official to whom he is subordinate must immediately make him surrender his post. Should [the supervisory official] not make him surrender his post, or should the person [in the position] delay and not voluntarily surrender his post] for a full twenty days: fine each of them two *liǎng* (approx. 31 g) of gold. Furthermore, use the “Statutes on Abscondence” to add to the sentence of the one who has not voluntarily surrendered his post.⁸

Refusing to vacate one's post might demonstrate laziness, incompetence, or negligence, but was also potentially a very serious form of misconduct, because a County Magistrate or Commandery Governor had access to significant financial and military resources, and refusing to hand over the reins of power at the local or regional level might signal his intention to build a power base from which to stage a rebellion. The final sentence in the statute carries a very serious message and a real punitive threat, for it signals that an intransigent official would be treated the same way as an absconding peasant who ran away from his tax obligations. The crime of abscondence carried serious penalties of shaving of the facial hair (a form of nonpermanent mutilation) and coerced labor, punishments normally reserved for criminal behavior and not normally imposed for

administrative negligence or poor performance by officials, which usually just warranted fines or dismissal from office.

From the perspective of the government, an even more serious form of official intransigence was the refusal to implement the policies or to uphold the laws of the state. In 227 BCE, in the state of Qin, the powerful Governor Teng 騰 of Nan 南 Commandery circulated a pointed letter to his subordinate officials, particularly County Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates, a copy of which was found in Shuihudi tomb no. 11. He declared that Qin state's "statutes and ordinances were complete" and yet officials intentionally did not utilize them but followed personal procedures or "wicked local customs" and did not uphold the law.⁹ What rankled Governor Teng so much was probably that local officials who had once served under the previous Chu regime were continuing local practices of administration and law and were not implementing the harsh and alien Qin system that Governor Teng wished them to employ.

For an actual example of a County Magistrate who resists upholding the laws of Qin, one can look to case no. 18 in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* text. In this case, which also transpired in former Chu-held territory, a district in You 攸 County in the Qin commandery of Cangwu 蒼梧 was in revolt. The revolt was poorly handled by the officials in You County, who lost multiple military engagements with the rebels. Magistrate Tui of You county is severely punished for not upholding the law, when he attempts to resolve the insurgency by writing to the First Emperor of Qin asking for the permission to show clemency toward the militiamen who fled the battles with the rebels. In his cross-examination under detention, Magistrate Tui was severely rebuked by the judiciary officials sent by the neighboring commandery. They stated:

Servants [of the emperor] should carefully uphold the categorical principles (i.e., the laws) when prosecuting [cases]. Now you, Tui, have let go of the categorical principles and have submitted documents to the emperor reporting that the only thing that could be done was to reduce the crimes of the new black-headed ones. Indeed, this was clearly a case of your wishing "to release and let guilty persons go." The officials are going to sentence you for this [crime].¹⁰

Magistrate Tui is severely punished, even for just suggesting governance through benevolence, because such Confucian inspired ideas were inimical to the Legalist state, which required the law to be applied uniformly and without qualification. Though Magistrate Tui claimed he was just trying to implement a policy of creative sentencing already carried out by other Magistrates, the First Emperor of Qin punished him harshly, probably to make an example out of him, and to demonstrate that a Confucian in Legalist clothing, one who intransigently refused to uphold the letter of the law, would not be tolerated among

imperial officials. In the end, Tui is shaved and sent to a labor camp with common criminals.

FORMS OF OFFICIAL CORRUPTION DURING THE QIN AND HAN

Official corruption manifested itself in various ways in early China, but all were characterized by private enrichment or empowerment at the expense of the state or the common people, or by the abuse of the authority or trust placed upon the official by the ruler. The most obvious form of official corruption was theft of government resources for private gain. We see this most clearly in case no. 15 in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* text, in which Magistrate Hui 恢 of Liyang 醴陽 County orders his personal secretary and some of his retainers to steal over five thousand liters of grain under his supervision and sell it on the open market. The opening statements in the case record read as follows:¹¹

In the seventh year [of Emperor Gaozu], on the *jǐwèi* day of the eighth month (September 10, 200 BCE), [Magistrate] Zhōng of Jiangling [County] reported: “Magistrate Hui of Liyang [County] robbed 263 *shí* and eight *dǒu* (approx. 5,276 l) of milled government grain.”

Hui’s salary grade is 600 bushels, and he holds the rank of Leader of the Masses of the Left.

Hui stated: “In truth, I ordered Retainer Scribe Shi to rob 263 *shí* and eight *dǒu* of milled government grain from Ji District of Liyang [County], and I ordered my retainers, Xing and Yi, both members of the rank and file, together with Shi, to sell [it]. They obtained six *jīn* and three *liǎng* of gold (approx. 1,534.5 g), [equivalent to] 15,050 cash. I am guilty.” The rest is as in the written document (viz., the initial report or the official accusation).

The words of Xing and Yi were, in every case, like Hui’s.

An inquiry [was conducted]: Hui’s illicit profit from the robbery was [valued at] more than 660 cash. Shi has absconded and was not interrogated. Everything else is as in the statements.¹²

But private use of government resources could take on forms other than simple theft. An item in the Han “Statutes on Miscellaneous Matters” (Za lǜ 雜律) from Zhangjia Shan prohibits officials from levying irregular taxes or demanding other unauthorized exactions from the people:

For one who exacts money or goods [from the people] without authorization: fine four *liǎng* (approx. 62 g) of gold. Charge him for what has been exacted and [and use it to] make reparation to the owner.¹³

An item in the “Statutes on Robbery” (Dao lǚ 盜律) from the same text prohibits borrowing or lending out government-owned items, and declares that doing so with items easily convertible to cash value was the equivalent of criminal robbery:

[For government officials who are entrusted with or have oversight of] valuable items privately and without authorization borrowing or lending [them]: for the borrowing or lending person, fine two *liǎng* (approx. 31 g) of gold. Should it be cash, gold, hempen cloth or silk, grain, horses or cattle: sharing the same categorical principle with robbers.¹⁴

In a variation or elaboration on this statute, an item in the “Statutes on Miscellaneous Matters” prohibits both officials and imperial servitors such as eunuchs (who were not categorized as officials) from lending cash or other valuable items out at interest, even if the cash or valuables were their own private assets.

For an official with a salary grade of 600 bushels or higher, as well as for one who personally serves the emperor [at court], who dares to loan cash or goods with interest: dismiss him.¹⁵

In early China, manual labor was also a resource with a quantifiable cash value, and misappropriating the labor of government-owned slaves or government-supervised convicts qualified as robbery. One can see this quite clearly in case nos. 9 and 10 from the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* text.

The Governor of Shu [Commandery] forwards the following doubtful case: Assistant [Scribe] Qi was in charge of convict-laborers.

Scribe Director Bing privately [and without authorization] employed the wall-builder, Huan, to perform work for [Bing’s] family. [Bing] reported this to Qi. Qi committed fraud in the account book to say: “[Huan] was building or maintaining government storehouses.”

I am in doubt as to what crime [Qi] is guilty of.

The report of [the Commandant of] the Court [stated]:

“It is the case that Qi ‘made counterfeit documents.’”¹⁶

The Governor of Shu [Commandery] forwards the following doubtful case: Chief of the Iron Mine Shan, privately [and without authorization], employed the wall-builder Tian and the grain-pounder Nü to make porridge, commanding them to work in his home. When he informed the [Commandery] Court [of this] in writing, Assistant [Scribe] Tian, and others, committed fraud in the account book [to say: “Tian and Nü] were

cooking for convict-laborers.” I am in doubt as to what crime [Tian] is guilty of.

The report of [the Commandant of] the Court [stated]:

“It is the case that Tian ‘made counterfeit documents.’”¹⁷

In the first case record, a low-ranking Scribe Director named Bing 冰 diverted some of the convict labor under the control of one of his assistants, a man named Qi 啟, and corruptly used the convicted criminal, Huan 環, to work for his family. When Bing informed Qi about this activity, he put Qi in a difficult position. Qi had no choice but to alter the account book, representing the labor as “building or maintaining government storehouses,” since he was nominally the person in charge of the laborers and could get in serious trouble for the activities of his superior, Bing.

The second case record introduces a corrupt official named Shan 山, who was Chief of the Iron Mine (Caitie Zhang 采鐵長) in Shu 蜀 Commandery (present-day Sichuan). Shan had taken two of the convict-laborers from his facility (a man named Tian 田 and a woman named Nü 女) and relocated them to his own residence where they served as cooks. Since he likely supervised hundreds of such laborers, he probably thought the diversion would go unnoticed. When it came time to forward the account book to the commandery for inspection, Shan’s assistant, an unfortunate man named Tian 恬, falsified the labor, representing it as “cooking for convict-laborers.” These two case records do not discuss the sentence for the actual diversion of labor for private purposes, because the crime under consideration was the falsification of the account books to cover up the misappropriation of the labor, which was likely the more serious crime.

The terms most commonly employed in the laws and the case records to describe these types of corruption are *si* 私 and *shan* 擅. The word *si*, which basically means “private” or “privately,” is used to indicate action that is taken on one’s own initiative and for one’s own private benefit. This is held in opposition to the words *guan* 官 (official) or *gong* 公 (public), which are related to government-owned materials or government-sponsored actions. The word *shan* (without authorization) also describes private or selfish action by an official, but adds the connotation of arrogating some level or authority to which one is not entitled. The word is used in the laws not only to describe unauthorized taxation, as seen above, but also for actions taken by an official which have not been authorized by his superior, or are in direct violation of the statutes or ordinances. Such actions include demolishing a government building on one’s own authority, prosecuting a legal case without an official denunciation, using the courier system for a non-urgent document, or even the unauthorized killing ordered by Magistrate Xin of Xinqi County, mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter.

While theft or misuse of government property by officials was a constant concern for the Qin and early Han rulers, the laws demonstrate that officials

accepting bribes to undermine the legal process was viewed as one of the most serious crimes an official could commit, undermining the very legitimacy of the state. The basic statute punishing bribery is contained in the “Statutes on Robbery” found at Zhangjiashan:

For one who receives bribes in order to warp the law, as well as for one who offers bribes: in every case, hold [them] liable for the illicit profit and consider [them] as robbers. For one whose crime [that he tried to avoid by receiving or offering the bribe] is more serious than robbery: sentence him according to the one that is more serious.¹⁸

Here, we see that the value of the bribe itself was considered as the stolen property in a robbery, unless the bribe was received to avoid prosecution for a more serious crime, in which case the official was charged with that crime instead. So, for example, if someone bribed an official to “warp the law” and not try his relative for murder, the more serious crime would be murder, and the penalty for the bribery would be execution for both the relative and for the official. This law is amended or superseded by an item in the “Statutes on the Composition of Judgments” (Ju lü 具律), which specifies that officials who accept bribes to try certain cases improperly are guilty of the more serious crime avoided or having stolen the value of the bribe, plus two degrees of punishment.¹⁹ That change removed nearly any chance for a light punishment and could easily have led to the execution of the official in most serious bribery cases.

Finally, official corruption could involve an abuse of power, using one’s position of trust and authority to gain advantage or satisfy one’s desires. The most serious example of such abuse of power is seen in case 16 in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* text, alluded to at the start of this chapter.

During the summer of 201 BCE, Magistrate Xin of Xinqi County was traveling outside the county seat inspecting outlying districts. He left his subordinate, a Judiciary Scribe named Wu 武, in charge of a rainmaking ritual to end a drought. Wu presumed to employ one of Xin’s personal retainers, who was supposed to be watching over Xin’s house, to dance or sing in the ritual. When Xin returned to question Wu about this, Wu was rude and insolent. Xin reached for his sword and cursed Wu, making a move to rush at him, whereupon Wu fled. Magistrate Xin later heard from another retainer that Wu was threatening to report Xin’s outburst to the Governor or even to the Chief Minister in the capital. Afraid of this possibility, Xin ordered another retainer of his named Cang 蒼 to murder Wu when he was out on bandit suppression patrol. Then, Magistrate Xin obstructed justice by preventing any detailed inquiry when Judiciary Scribe Wu’s colleague reported his disappearance.

The behavior of Magistrate Xin, who had conspired and ordered the murder of his own Judiciary Scribe, demonstrates that he was a ruthless, violent man, who used methods born of the strife of years of civil war. He was surrounded by

a group of personal retainers who were just as ruthless as and more loyal to Xin than to the laws of the empire. Liu Bang 劉邦 (r. 206–202 BCE as King of Han, 202 BCE–195 BCE as emperor) clearly did not need this type of County Magistrate to get his newly founded Han dynasty off to the kind of start that would encourage those who still had doubts about its legitimacy to submit to its authority.

GOVERNMENT COUNTERMEASURES

To help stem the tide of official intransigence and corruption, the Qin and Han governments employed countermeasures that consisted of a mixture of checks and balances, bureaucratic oversight, deterrents, and punitive laws. First, the Qin and Han regimes each implemented a system of mutual responsibility to govern the process of recommending a man for official service. A new Qin or early-Han period official had to be recommended for office by another official who personally guaranteed his competency and honesty. Before the development of examination systems in later imperial China, the path of recommendation was the main avenue into officialdom. An item in the Han “Statutes on the Establishment of Officials” (Zhili lǜ 置吏律) from Zhangjiashan states:

When someone recommends and guarantees a person to be an official, should the one whom he guarantees be corrupt or unequal to his responsibilities and, thereby, be dismissed, also dismiss the guarantor. Should [the guarantor] not be an official, nor someone who personally serves [the emperor at court]: fine four *liǎng* (approx. 62 g) of gold and two years of garrison duty at the frontier.²⁰

As one can see, this statute covered not only the case of recommending a man who turned out to be corrupt (*bu lian* 不廉), but also one who was “unequal to his responsibilities” (*busheng ren* 不勝任), i.e., incompetent. The *Historical Records* (*Shi ji* 史記) of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 BCE), states that, “According to the laws of Qin, if one recommends and guarantees someone to be an official, and the person whom they have guaranteed turns out to be not good, in each case, consider them guilty of the same crime which the guaranteed person was guilty of.”²¹ This statement goes beyond the statute seen at Zhangjiashan, since the guarantor is not only dismissed but also charged with the same crime as the guaranteed person. The so-called *Answers to Questions on Legal Principles and Statutes* (Falü dawen 法律答問) text from Shuihudi tomb no. 11 suggests that, under certain circumstances, if the guarantor committed a crime, the one whom he guaranteed in another position could also be dismissed.²² This corresponds with the ideology behind the system of mutual responsibility. The Qin law also implies that if the guaranteed person was later promoted to a higher position, his link to his original guarantor was

broken, and the two were no longer held mutually responsible for each other's actions.

A second method employed by the Qin and Han governments to counter corruption was a thorough system of administrative and accounting oversight. Most bureaus in the county administration, for example the Bureau of Granaries (Cang Cao 倉曹), had a similarly named counterpart in the commandery administration, which had oversight over its operation. That hierarchy of responsibility not only facilitated empire-wide data collection on matters like grain distribution, but also enabled detailed accounting oversight that could uncover corruption at the local level. The "Statutes on Checking" (Xiao lǜ 效律) in the Qin and Han laws also required that the account books and storage facilities of government offices or factories undergo a thorough review each time there was a changeover of the overseer, especially those who oversaw grain resources or items of military value. Any shortages (or surpluses) could be discovered at these changeovers, and the appropriate officials held jointly accountable.²³

The early imperial laws and case records from Zhangjiashan reveal that a careful attention to jurisdiction, and an order to change jurisdiction when appropriate, could also detect or deter official corruption. It was important to shift jurisdiction to an administrative unit at the same level or up to a higher level to prevent local cover-ups of corruption or abuse of power. For example, an item from the "Statutes on Levies" (Xing lǜ 興律) from Zhangjiashan requires that all cases prosecuted at the county level which resulted in the death penalty be reviewed by the Commandery Governor before the sentence could be carried out. The Governor delegated a judicial inspector to review the entire case record in the county and report back to him. As a further check, the report was to be reviewed by the Assistant Commandery Governor as well, just to ensure that the Governor was not in collusion with corrupt county officials. In addition, all those cases prosecuted at the county level involving accidental homicide through mistakes or during horseplay, crimes that did not warrant the death penalty, had to be reviewed by the Governor. This provision was clearly instituted to prevent corruption by county officials who might attempt to cover up a murder by classifying it as an accidental homicide.²⁴

Furthermore, it appears from a Han statute quoted on a slip found at the Juyan 居延 site that all cases involving accusations against officials within the jurisdiction of a commandery had to be reported to the Governor.²⁵ At his discretion, the Governor could have the commandery court take over these cases as well, to prevent legal corruption and cover-up at the local level. In case no. 15 in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* text, Magistrate Hui of Liyang was accused of stealing grain by the Magistrate of a neighboring county. The case was subsequently tried in the court of the Governor of Nan commandery, which had jurisdiction over both counties.

Finally, there is the example of case no. 18 of the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* from Zhangjiashan, which was introduced briefly above. In the wake of the failed attacks on the rebel forces, word reached the Chief Prosecutor (Yushi Dafu 御史大夫), the second-most-powerful minister in the bureaucracy, who was specifically charged with preventing abuses of authority and corruption in officialdom. He ordered a reinvestigation of the debacle, but commissioned officials from neighboring Nan commandery to conduct the investigation, since the Governor of Cangwu commandery might have had a serious conflict of interest in the case, for the officials in You County were his subordinates. In the final sentencing, the Governor was indeed impeached for his role in the failure, and the Magistrate of You County was detained in shackles and sent to a labor camp.²⁶

The imposition of severe criminal penalties constituted the primary tool used by the Qin and early-Han governments to restrain official intransigence, corruption, and abuse of power. In many categories of crime that overlapped with those committed by a member of the general population, the punishment of an official for the same crime was often increased by at least one degree to serve as a deterrent, and the official was not allowed to use his wealth, rank, or position to reduce that penalty.

For example, when a commoner engaged in consensual illicit intercourse (*hejian* 和奸) with a married woman of the same status, each party was spared permanent mutilation but made a hard-labor convict as penalty for fornication.²⁷ The perpetrator of forcible illicit intercourse (*qiangjian* 强奸), i.e., rape, in an equal-status situation was castrated and made a palace bond servant.²⁸ But when it was an official who engaged in illicit intercourse with another man's wife, the possibility of consent on the woman's part was ruled out because the official was able to wield power over her. In these cases, the official was prosecuted for rape.²⁹

During the early Han period, as discovered in case no. 15 in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* text, the penalty for an official like Magistrate Hui of Liyang County who stole state grain or other valuable items under his supervision was the same as that for a commoner who stole similar items. The exact penalty was determined by a valuation of the items at the time of arrest in the county where the crime occurred, ranging in severity from a fine of one *liang* (approx. 15.5 g) of gold to undergoing tattooing on the face and being made to serve as a hard-labor convict. But the most severe punishment was reached with a robbery valued at only 661 cash coins, less than the value of one head of cattle. A high government official like Magistrate Hui had access to far more valuable items, and in his case, he had stolen state grain worth 15,050 cash, and yet his penalty was the same as that for a commoner who had stolen grain valued at only 661 cash. Because corruption cases like that of Magistrate Hui must have been very common in the early Han, a special statute was written that stated that an official who stole goods under his supervision worth more than ten *jin*

(approx. 2.48 kg) of gold was subject to the death penalty of being “cast away in the marketplace.”³⁰ This then became one of only a handful of aggravated robbery crimes during the Han that warranted execution, along with causing injury or death during a robbery, engaging in extortion, coming from a competing polity to raid, abducting free people to sell them, and tomb robbery.³¹

As stated earlier, officials who accepted bribes and the person who proffered the bribe were prosecuted as if they had stolen the monetary value of the bribe. But if the official accepted the bribe in order to try certain legal cases improperly, two degrees of punishment were added to the crime, an aggravating punishment that could easily result in the death penalty for corrupt officials.

Under normal circumstances, government officials were merely fined for crimes of negligence or for administrative errors, while for crimes classified as robbery or assault they could normally use their high rank to avoid any mutilating punishment or even redeem the crime with a cash payment. This was a glaring loophole that might have allowed a corrupt official to get away with crimes of serious graft or abuse of power. The final section of Magistrate Hui of Liyang’s case from the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* reveals how the early Han government sought to close that loophole.

The case was tried: That Hui is an official and that he robbed [items valued at] more than 660 cash have all been carefully verified.

[The officials] made the matching: “Hui matches undergoing tattooing and being made a wall builder. He may not use rank to reduce, commute, or redeem [his punishment].

“The ‘Statutes [on Robbery] state’: ‘The illicit profit from a robbery valued in excess of 660 cash: tattoo [the criminal] and make [him] a wall builder.’

“An ordinance [states]: ‘When an official commits robbery, the one who matches being mutilated is to be mutilated. He may not use rank to reduce, commute, or redeem [his punishment].’ This was used to match Hui.”

Hui’s residency is in the Jiancheng Ward of the town of Liyi, and he is subordinate to the Governor of Nan commandery.

Governor [Jin] Qiang of Nan commandery, probationary Assistant [Governor] Ji, and Accessory Scribe Jianshe prosecuted [the case].³²

The quoted ordinance, a form of legislation enacted to address a specific situation and based on an oral proclamation of the emperor, closes the loophole quite completely, barring officials who engaged in robbery from avoiding any part of their sentence. Magistrate Hui would not be able to use his high rank of “Leader of the Masses of the Left” (rank no. 10 on the Han scale) to avoid mutilation, nor could he return any amount of this rank to the government to commute the sentence to a lesser sentence or to redeem it outright.

CONCLUSION

Based on the texts that have come down to us, and on those that have been recently unearthed, it is quite evident that official intransigence and corruption were major problems during the Qin and early Han periods. That is not to say that earlier periods of Chinese history were also not plagued by these problems, for looking at texts from the late Warring States period, such as the *Han Feizi*, reveals that corruption was endemic in all the competing third century BCE polities. But there were special factors at work during the Qin and early Han periods that made intransigence, corruption, and abuse of power especially pervasive.

The general climate of brutal warfare that characterized the Qin conquest of the rival polities during the late third century BCE and the Han victory over its rivals in the rebellion and civil war years between 209 and 202 BCE made it supremely difficult to recruit civic-minded men for office. Many appointees to higher office were former military men like Magistrate Xin of Xinqi County, whom we met earlier, probably appointed to office because of their loyalty and bravery in battle and not because of their upright character or public spirit. When peace was established, such men continued to act in a ruthless fashion, for they were coldhearted and ambitious. The years of war and social turmoil also led to an environment of general lawlessness that was very hard to settle, even when all the rival factions had been vanquished.³³

Another issue particular to the Qin and early Han periods involved the employment of officials from a previous regime. When the Qin or Han armies conquered a particular area, it was not practical to populate all the local offices with loyal subjects of the conquering state. It was far more expedient to reappoint local officials in their former (or comparable) positions and only appoint new senior officials, such as County Magistrates or Commandery Governors. This left a situation in which local administrators and legal officials were trained under a different system and only held nominal loyalty to the new regime and its policies. Governor Teng of Nan commandery, mentioned above, felt great frustration that the officials in his territory refused to follow the laws and customs of Qin governance and intransigently refused to suppress the old Chu customs. Many early Han officials, likewise, were former adherents of Xiang Yu 項羽 (ca. 232–202 BCE), the man who was Liu Bang's chief rival during the civil war years, and had only belatedly surrendered to Han authority. It is not surprising that they would look out for their own benefit while in office, rather than for the benefit of their new overlord or even for that of the common people.

Corruption is never eliminated during the Han period, but the situation appears to improve somewhat from the pervasive corruption born of the chaos, lawlessness, and bloodshed of the beginning of the dynasty. This improvement may have been partially the result of the coercive measures detailed earlier

for the suppression of intransigence and corruption, but I would suggest that the principal changes responsible for the apparent reduction in corruption were not punitive, but environmental and ideological in nature. The general climate of peace that prevailed between 195 and 135 BCE allowed the empire a respite from the climate of warfare and economic hardship, engendering the feelings of stability, prosperity, and even pride that made a civic-minded bureaucrat easier to find.³⁴

During this same time period, the government also began to promote a new ideology of official service. As mentioned earlier, the Qin and Han bureaucracies had always relied heavily on a system of recommendation to fill the ranks of officialdom, but the relevant regulations did not mention specific desired moral qualities for candidates. Then, starting in 196 BCE, the Han emperors issued a series of edicts, at very irregular intervals, calling for the recruitment of men for office who were “the worthy ones of the realm, wise and capable.” These invitations called on high officials and Governors to recommend men with certain character traits like “manifest virtue” (*ming de* 明德), “worthiness and goodness” (*xian liang* 賢良), “sincerity and uprightness” (*fang zheng* 方正), or men who “spoke frankly and admonished unflinchingly” (*zhiyan jijian* 直言極諫). On arrival in the capital, these men were examined by writing responses to questions set by the emperor or by some other high official.³⁵ Starting from 134 BCE onward, based on a proposal to Emperor Wu by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, a system was put in place that promised a more regular flow of worthy candidates, for each commandery and regional lordship was to annually recommend two men as “filial and pure” (*xiao lian* 孝廉).³⁶ Some of these men were fresh local standouts, and others already held junior offices or clerical positions. Michael Loewe suspects that most of the men recommended through these systems were probably just favorites of high-ranking officials who sought to establish a clientele.³⁷

After they arrived in the capital, those recommended under these systems usually had to undergo a probationary period in which they served as Court Gentlemen (Lang 郎), guarding the emperor and his palace, and only after a few years of proving themselves worthy and undergoing annual assessments could they be appointed to bureaucratic office. This waiting period probably helped weed out many bad candidates for office. Another method for advancing worthy men for office was through the Imperial Academy (Taixue 太學), where young men studied classical texts under master teachers. From about 124 BCE onward, graduates could also be appointed as a Court Gentleman after an examination, and later into regular office.³⁸ Some hoped that, after being inculcated with Confucian ideology praising loyalty, righteousness, and humanity derived from the Five Classics, these men would become the type of incorruptible official that the empire needed. A recent study by Cai Liang has shown, however, that it took much longer than earlier scholars had believed for Confucians and their ideology to penetrate the bureaucracy.³⁹

The Qin government expected its bureaucratic officials to be incorrupt and perform their specific duties with conscientiousness and loyalty, and it reinforced this expectation with rewards for meritorious service and punishments for intransigence and corruption. In that sense, the bureaucracy was treated like a branch of the military. What the system lacked was a stronger ideological motivation for ethical conduct on the part of officials. This was eventually provided during the middle-Western Han by the Confucian ethic instilled in officials through the recommendation and examination systems, making the bureaucracy the foundation of the Confucian-Legalist state for the next two millennia.

NOTES

1. For the revised official publication of the original text, see Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian*, 99 (slip no. 86). See the critical edition of the text, with translation and commentary on the entire case in Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State and Society in Early Imperial China*, section 4.16. Hereafter, *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian* is cited as *Zhangjiashan Han*, and Barbieri-Low and Yates as *LSS*.

2. For corruption in the ancient world, see the essays in Schuller, *Korruption im Altertum*. One of the oldest official statements on corruption was issued by the pharaoh Horemheb (r. 1306–1292 BCE), who helped to restore Egypt after the disastrous reign of Akhenaten, and inscribed on the walls of the Temple of Karnak. For an analysis and translation of this decree, see Kruchten, *Le décret d'Horemheb*.

3. Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 13, 15 “Yu shu” slip nos. 7, 10; *Zhangjiashan Han*, 22 (slip no. 93), 111 (slip no. 228); *LSS*, section 4.22 (slip no. 228).

4. Trigger, “Generalized Coercion and Inequality,” 46–61.

5. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 2:956–958.

6. This principle is humorously illustrated by the story of the keeper of the royal hat and the keeper of the royal robe in the “Two Handles” chapter of the *Han Feizi*. See Watson, trans., *Han Fei Tzu: Basic Writings*, 32.

7. *LSS*, “Statutes on the Establishment of Officials” (sec. 3.10) no. 4 (slip no. 216); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 37–38 (slip no. 216).

8. *LSS*, “Statutes on the Establishment of Officials” (sec. 3.10) no. 2 (slip nos. 211–212); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 37 (slip nos. 211–212).

9. Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 13 “Yushu,” slip nos. 1–8.

10. *LSS*, section 4.18 (slip nos. 149–150); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 104 (slip nos. 149–150).

11. On the original bamboo slips, a large black circle separates each of the case records in the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases* (Zouyan shu). A smaller black circle separates the statements of individuals in the case record or the major stages of the judicial process. See *LSS*, 1:58–59.

12. *LSS*, section 4.15 (slip nos. 69–71); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 98 (slip nos. 69–71).

13. *LSS*, “Statutes on Miscellaneous Matters” (sec. 3.8) no. 4 (slip no. 185); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 33 (slip no. 185).

14. LSS, “Statutes on Robbery” (sec. 3.2) no. 16 (slip no. 77); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 19 (slip no. 77).

15. LSS, “Statutes on Miscellaneous Matters” (sec. 3.8) no. 3 (slip no. 184); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 33 (slip no. 184).

16. LSS, section 4.9 (slip nos. 54–55); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 96 (slip nos. 54–55).

17. LSS, section 4.10 (slip nos. 56–57); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 96 (slip nos. 56–57).

18. LSS, “Statutes on Robbery” (sec. 3.2) no. 5 (slip no. 60); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 16 (slip no. 60).

19. LSS, “Statutes on the Composition of Judgments” (sec. 3.3) no. 9 (slip no. 95); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 22 (slip no. 95).

20. LSS, “Statutes on the Establishment of Officials” (sec. 3.10) no. 1 (slip no. 210); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 36 (slip no. 210).

21. See Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 79.2417.

22. Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 127 “Falü dawen,” slip no. 145; A. F. P. Hulswé, *Remnants of Ch’in Law*, 160–61 D123. This follows the reading in Gao Heng, *Qin Han jiandu zhong fazhi wenshu jikao*, 30–34.

23. LSS, “Statutes on Checking” (sec. 3.19) slip nos. 347–353; *Zhangjiashan Han*, 56–57 (slip nos. 347–353); Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, 69–76 “Xiao lü,” slip nos. 1–60.

24. LSS, “Statutes on Levies” (sec. 3.23) no. 1 (slip nos. 396–397); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 62 (slip nos. 396–397).

25. The text reads: “The ‘Statutes on Incarcerated Persons’ states: When there is a denunciation [by a nonofficial] or an official accusation [by an official] against [an official], no matter how minor or major [the crime], all are to be reported to the 2,000-bushel official (viz., the Governor) to whom [the person] is subordinate” (《囚律》：告劾毋輕重，皆關屬所二千石官^①). See Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo et al., *Juyan xinjian*, 2:23 (slip no. EPT 10.2A). This interpretation follows Gao Heng, *Qin Han jiandu zhong fazhi wenshu jikao*, 149–150. The site of Juyan comprises the former defense lines and beacon towers of the Han in what is now Gansu Province.

26. LSS, sec. 4.18 (slip nos. 124–161); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 103–106 (slip nos. 124–161).

27. LSS, “Statutes on Miscellaneous Matters” (sec. 3.8) no. 11 (slip no. 192); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 34 (slip no. 192).

28. LSS, “Statutes on Miscellaneous Matters” (sec. 3.8) no. 12 (slip no. 193); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 34 (slip no. 193).

29. See references in note 27.

30. See the quotation of this statute by Ru Shun 如淳 in his commentary on the *Han shu*. See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 66.2902. Magistrate Hui’s theft did not quite reach the level for this statute to apply, for it is revealed that the grain he stole was only valued at six *jīn* and three *liǎng* of gold (approx. 1,534.5 g).

31. LSS, “Statutes on Robbery” (sec. 3.2) no. 9 (slip nos. 65–66); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 17 (slip nos. 65–66).

32. LSS, section 4.15 (slip nos. 71–74); *Zhangjiashan Han*, 98 (slip nos. 71–74).

33. Ban Gu refers to this general lawlessness and also vividly describes a situation at the beginning of the empire when enforcement of the laws was almost impossible, for “the net of the law let through fishes so large that they could swallow a boat.” See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 23.1096, 1104.

34. It is extremely difficult to prove that the period from 195 to 135 BCE was characterized by a “general climate of peace,” but this is the impression one gets from the surviving sources. There were sporadic raids from the Xiongnu pastoralists throughout the period, one coming dangerously close to the capital. Ongoing tensions with the independent Kingdom of Nanyue also led to a surge in military preparedness in the south, ca. 188–180 BCE. Finally, there was the brief but intense Revolt of the Seven Regional Lordships in 154 BCE, which nearly toppled Emperor Jing from power. Yet, in spite of these conflicts, there was no empire-wide civil war, nor any openly declared war against a foreign power during this time period. The assessment provided by Ban Gu in his “Treatise on Food and Money” (*Han shu* 24A.1135) also portrays this time period as one of general peace and increasing economic prosperity.

35. For some of the earliest edicts of this type, see Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 1B.71 (Emperor Gaozu), 4.116, 127 (Emperor Wen), 6.155–156 (Emperor Wu). Michael Loewe argues that there is no proof until 165 BCE that any of the edicts resulted in the recommendation of a person who was actually appointed to office. See Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China*, 120. Also, men who were aged, sick, or disabled were not welcome, nor were the sons of merchants eligible.

36. See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 6.160, 56.2508–2513.

37. See Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China*, 115.

38. For an overview of the various methods of recruitment into the Han bureaucracy, including several not surveyed in this paper, see Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, 132–142; Houn, “The Civil Service Recruitment System of the Han Dynasty,” 138–164; Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China*, chap. 4; Bu Xianqun, *Qin Han guanliao zhidu*.

39. Though the dominant narrative for the last seventy-five years has declared that the reign of Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 BCE) signaled the “triumph of Confucianism” at court and in the bureaucracy, Cai Liang has convincingly demonstrated that *ru* (Confucians) did not really begin to strongly infiltrate the bureaucracy at the middle and upper levels until the decades following the reign of Emperor Wu, after the destruction of the old prestigious office-holding families in the wake of the witchcraft scandal of 91 BCE had opened a power vacuum. See Cai Liang, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire*.

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PART II

Orthopraxy vs. Heteropraxy

Fluidity in Ritual and Social Norms

RITUALS WITHOUT RULES

Han Dynasty Mourning Practices Revisited

MIRANDA BROWN AND ANNA-ALEXANDRA FODDE-REGUER

Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. 186–196 CE) was not a charitable man. His essay, “Screwing up Ritual” (Qianli 愆禮), sharply criticized the behavior of his contemporaries, supplying numerous examples of men who Ying Shao accused of either “going too far” or “falling short” in matters of ritual. These included a man who adopted an unrelated widow from the road as a surrogate mother; three officials who wore mourning for their patrons or teachers; a fellow who behaved indelicately at his wife’s funeral; an official who wore mourning for an unrelated woman; and a literatus who treated a friend like an older brother.¹

At first, Ying Shao’s essay would appear to be of little interest, aside perhaps from its gossipy quality. One might imagine, for example, that his complaints only confirm conventional wisdom about ritual rules in ancient China. Since the nineteenth century, sinologists, including J. M. De Groot, Poo Mu-chou, Kenneth Brashier, and Miranda Brown, have treated the ritual classics as rule books. Undoubtedly, such classics, particularly the *Ceremonies and Rituals* (*Yili* 儀禮), lend themselves to this kind of interpretation. Many of these dry works are concerned with minutiae, expounding on the protocol for occasions like funerals and prescribing matters ranging from the length of the mourning period to seemingly irrelevant details like the proper cut of the sleeve.²

Through a close reading of “Screwing Up Ritual,” this essay challenges the commonsense reading of the classics and conventional assumptions about ritual in ancient times. It does so by investigating whether Ying Shao actually read the classics as rule books or interpreted ritual errors as violations of canonical prescriptions.

Some readers will wonder why the focus is on Ying Shao, a polemical figure and a bad writer to boot. The choice of this man is strategic and reflects his position in time and space, as well as his later importance. Ying Shao reached maturity during the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE), when, for the first time, the classical or Ru 儒 tradition became prominent and, some would even say,

dominant.³ During this era, Ru values were enshrined in the system of bureaucratic recruitment, and classically inspired practices flourished, especially the so-called three years of mourning (*san nian sang* 三年喪).⁴ Ying Shao's access to powerful individuals offers another reason to examine his views in particular. The scion of an important ministerial clan, Ying Shao not only knew many of the rich and famous personally, but was also familiar with the ritual controversies of the age.⁵ Ying Shao was finally an influential figure. As one later biographer put it, those living in the centuries after Ying Shao "deferred to his wide learning," despite the roughness of his prose.⁶

After defining the two terms in the title (ritual and rules), this chapter examines three cases from "Screwing up Ritual." It shows, specifically, that Ying Shao did not equate ritual errors with the breaking of canonical rules. In fact, this second-century figure never invoked canonical prescriptions in his denunciations of his contemporaries. After refuting the conventional view, the discussion then offers an alternative reading of "Screwing Up Ritual." It proposes that Ying Shao's notion of ritual mistakes only makes sense within the broader context of his theory of ritual, as a constellation of prevailing practices, or fashions (*fengsu* 風俗), rather than a body of timeless practices. As fashion, ritual was a matter of style for Ying Shao. In Ying Shao's eyes, the gaffe-prone mourner differed from someone with good ritual "sense" insofar as the former lacked the creativity, discretion, and tact necessary for rising to the ceremonial occasion.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

A few words about the meaning of "ritual" and "rules" are in order. Since the publication of Catherine Bell's *Ritual Theory/Ritual Practice* (1992), the term "ritual" has become something of a dirty word (albeit one that sinologists constantly use). In her classic work, Bell challenges the assumption of ritual as a stable, cross-cultural unit of analysis.⁷ According to her, the definition of ritual represents a moving target, reflecting less scholarly consensus about the nature of ritual than the larger goals of theorists.⁸ While Bell's point about the messiness of "ritual" is well taken, the authors of this chapter maintain that the term is too useful to jettison. For a start, "ritual" serves as a convenient and instantly recognizable placeholder for the Chinese character *li* 禮. Additionally, the messiness of the notion of "ritual" is actually an advantage. Like its counterpart in English, *li* was a slippery concept. As the discussion in this chapter shall demonstrate, the precise meaning of this term varied across texts and was shaped by the agendas of ancient writers.⁹

Though not yet a bad word, "rule" is almost as fraught as "ritual," since it too is ambiguous. In English, the term often refers to an emic concept, to social norms "expressly stated and explicitly recognized like a moral or juridical law."¹⁰

The term also points to an etic notion, to theoretical models devised by modern researchers to account for the practices of their subjects. This chapter will employ “rules” primarily in the former sense, as its goal is to lay bare the ways in which the early Chinese talked about ritual misconduct and standards.

The meaning of “broken rules” deserves to be unpacked. At least three dissimilar understandings of this phenomenon exist. To begin with, some scholars equate broken rules with *deliberate violations of classical prescriptions*.¹¹ One study, by Michael Nylan, is a prime example of this approach. Based on her reading of Ying Shao, Nylan argues that some second- and third-century men flouted rules that limited the expression of grief. In so doing, such men purportedly won fame among those contemporaries who were impressed with the willingness to act above and beyond the dictates of ritual—or offended those who disapproved of such displays of irreverence.

Second, scholars interpret charges of ritual errors as symptoms of contested norms; that is, of people accusing each other of having followed the wrong set of rules. This approach is exemplified by an important paper by Lai Guolong, which examines the mourning diagram recovered by archaeologists from the Mawangdui site (ca. 168 BC). As Lai shows, this diagram related an account of mourning obligations different from those recorded in the canonical classics.¹² In his view, the Han elite conceived of ritual life in terms of clear rules, but they had yet to reach a consensus about which set of prescriptions was authoritative. Consequently, disputes arose about whether a mourner had behaved improperly.

Finally, scholars such as Yang Shuda, Kamiya Noriko, and Keith Knapp explain ritual mistakes as signs of widespread ignorance of classical prescription in ancient times, or what scholars awkwardly refer to as “incomplete Confucianization.”¹³ By this, such scholars mean that in the Han dynasty, men failed to observe the proper rules of mourning because they did not know any better. Presumably this was because the Han imperial state did not enforce ritual norms and classical literacy was generally low.

RITUAL RULES?

Did Ying Shao believe that his contemporaries faltered in ritual matters because they had broken the rules—either out of disregard for canonical prescriptions, a penchant for following unorthodox rules, or simple ignorance? To answer this question, three representative examples of Ying Shao’s complaints from “Screwing Up Ritual” are analyzed below. These cover (1) a case in which an important official left office to wear mourning for a political patron; (2) an instance in which a man appeared unmoved at his wife’s funeral; and (3) an incident in which another senior official requested a leave of absence to wear mourning for his neighbor’s mother, a woman who was *not* a relative.

Case 1: To Wear or Not to Wear? Mourning for a Political Patron

To test whether Ying Shao equated ritual failings with violations of canonical rules, one should review the case of Wu Kuang 吳匡 (fl. ca. 146–164 CE), a senior Han official and commandery governor. The basic facts of the case, related by Ying Shao, are as follows: Wu Kuang once left office to observe mourning for a man who had previously nominated him for a promotion. When he heard the bad news, Wu immediately quit his official post and donned mourning. Although Ying Shao acknowledged that Wu was obliged to the late man, the author of “Screwing Up Ritual” disapproved of Wu’s manner of mourning, deeming it excessive in light of the relationship that actually existed between Wu and his patron. In Ying Shao’s view, a senior Han official should have concerned himself with more important things than the passing of a patron—the affairs of the state or the welfare of the commoners, for example.¹⁴

Only a hasty reading would suggest that Ying Shao accused Wu of thumbing his nose at the rules. True, Ying Shao deplored Wu’s conduct, something obvious from Ying Shao’s characteristically angry tone. And it is also true Ying Shao criticized Wu by citing chapter and verse from the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu jing* 春秋經), a canonical text accepted by many as the teachings of Confucius during the Han dynasty:¹⁵

When a minister, who has been sent out with the royal charge, heard of the death of his parents, he would proceed slowly, continuing on his path without returning. The lord would then dispatch someone to follow and to bring him back, and this was what was considered according to ritual propriety (*li*).¹⁶

It is worth noting here that Ying Shao did *not* even hint that Wu had disregarded canonical rules. The passage Ying Shao cited from the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was not a prescription, strictly speaking. It informed readers what men had done in the past, as opposed to what they should do in the present. Furthermore, the classical passage in question was of dubious relevance to Wu’s case. Recounting the conduct of ministers whose parents had unexpectedly died, the passage said nothing about how a man was to mark the loss of a patron.

Case 2: No Signs of Grief

What evidence suggests that Ying Shao ascribed ritual faults to obeying the wrong set of rules? In this regard the second case, involving Xue Qin 薛勤, bears discussion because, at the very least, it indicates controversy over competing ritual norms. According to Ying Shao, Mr. Xue had behaved badly at the funeral of his wife of forty years. While interring her, Xue reportedly said in a loud voice, “Fortunately, you didn’t die young (*xing bu wei yao* 幸不為夭).”¹⁷ Ying

Shao was unimpressed with Mr. Xue's conduct and fumed, "How can one possess feelings of loss and death, cut off for all eternity and be without a grieved countenance?"¹⁸

Some care must be taken with Ying Shao's remarks, as they present a number of interpretative challenges. It is easy to assume that Ying Shao had faulted Xue Qin for following popular practice rather than canonical prescription. After all, in his denunciation of the man, Ying Shao pit classical prescription against popular practice, the latter of which he disparaged as a "vulgar saying" (*liyu* 俚語). As he explained it, the former called for men to vent their grief, to allow themselves to become so weak and emaciated from sorrow as to require the assistance of the mourning cane. Hence, the classical dictum: "The dictates of ritual deem it suitable for men to use canes when mourning wives" (*li wei shi qi zhang* 禮為適妻杖).¹⁹ The latter, in contrast, mandated the opposite and militated against any mourning for wives whatsoever: "The rites have nothing to do with wives" (*qi fei li suo yu* 妻非禮所與).²⁰ Based on the fact that he remained impassive at his wife's funeral, it seems likely, even probable, that Xue had chosen popular custom over classical doctrine. If one furthermore supposes that Ying Shao, a self-anointed expert on all matters ritual, privileged the classics over "vulgar sayings," then Ying Shao must have held Xue's choice against him. Or did he?

Upon inspection, a different picture of Ying Shao's complaints emerges. Though he referenced the classics, Ying Shao did not fault Xue Qin for failing to abide by canonical doctrine. On the contrary, Ying Shao disagreed vehemently with the doctrine. He thought it was wrong for *any* man to use the cane for support when mourning a wife. This much can be inferred from Ying Shao's criticisms of another fellow, Wang Gong 王龔 [fl. 121–140], who had been a high official. Unlike Mr. Xue, who had remained stone-faced at his wife's funeral, Wang Gong had gone to the opposite extreme. Taking classical authority at face value, Wang and his sons had used the canes at the funerals of their wives, supposedly because they were wracked with sorrow. This, Ying Shao complained, had been "over the top." Presumably, the Wangs should have reserved the use of the cane, the ultimate symbol of grief, for a greater blow, the death of parents.²¹

Case 3: A Leave of Absence for a Neighbor's Mother

This leaves the following possibility: did Ying Shao see ritual missteps as a consequence of ignorance, specifically, of classical prescription? In this connection, the case of Yang Zhi 羊陟 (fl. 147–178), is instructive and the relevant facts follow.²²

A chancellor took a short leave from office, lasting only ten days, to bury his mother. As most of his contemporaries would have quit their posts and worn at least twenty-five months of mourning, the chancellor's decision made waves.²³ In response, the chancellor's nephew returned to their native place for

the burial, presumably to wear mourning for the dead woman in his uncle's place. If this were not enough, hundreds of the chancellor's neighbors came out in mourning,²⁴ including Yang Zhi, a senior official, who also requested a leave from his post. Apparently, Yang and his fellow mourners had intended to pressure, or better still, to shame the chancellor into wearing mourning for his neglected mother (though one does not know whether they ultimately succeeded). While Yang's plan met with approval in some quarters, it also raised eyebrows. Seeking to dissuade Yang from damaging his reputation, one of Yang's friends told him that the request for leave was inappropriate, because Yang had never been a subordinate of the chancellor. Yang, however, disregarded his friend's advice and stayed the course.

Although it is plausible that Ying Shao chalked up Yang's error to ignorance of the classics, this explanation falters upon scrutiny. To be sure, Ying Shao made no bones about saying that Yang had been in the wrong. As Ying Shao put it, Yang had "violated the rites and erred with respect to mourning etiquette (*fanli weizhi* 犯禮違制)."²⁵ Yang's mastery of the classics (or lack thereof), however, was not the problem in Ying Shao's eyes. Ying Shao even acknowledged that Yang knew the classics, pointing out the classical precedent behind Yang's egregious conduct. As Ying Shao stated, the canonical *Ritual Record* (*Liji* 禮記) reported the case of one of Confucius's disciples. The disciple, a virtuous character, had been the steward of a lord who had defied convention by refusing to wear mourning for his elder brother. Seeking to admonish his lord, the disciple put on mourning for the lord's elder brother, causing the lord to see the error of his ways.²⁶

FROM RITUAL RULES TO RITUAL FASHIONS

The discussion has called attention to the drawbacks of treating Ying Shao as an enforcer of canonical rules. True, Ying Shao cited the classics copiously in his criticisms of his contemporaries. Still, he never insisted that anyone abide by classical prescriptions. On the contrary, he even attacked some contemporaries who did precisely that! All this leaves the question: How did Ying Shao think about ritual errors if not in terms of broken rules? Clearly, Ying Shao saw ritual behavior in normative terms. After all, Ying could say when someone's conduct struck him as misguided and the reasons he felt such conduct was supposedly wrong. Before Ying Shao's conception of ritual mistakes can be made legible, however, a clearer understanding of his picture of ritual as ever-changing fashions is necessary. Such a conception of ritual, moreover, inclined Ying Shao to regard the failings of his contemporaries as deficiencies in ritual "sense"—the ingenuity, judgment, and taste required for picking the right outfit and accessories for occasions like funerals.

The title of the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義, the work in which Ying Shao placed "Screwing Up Ritual," offers the first clue of the author's view of mourning and other ceremonial practices.²⁷ To see this, one must look at the characters that

comprise *fengsu*, a compound often translated as customs or habits. To begin with, *feng* 風, which literally meant and still means “wind,” referred to the transitory influences of a place, environmental as well as cultural. Hence, the phrase Ying Shao quoted, “Go a thousand miles (*li* 里) and the *feng* will be different,” was used to evoke differences in local custom and passing phenomena such as weather.²⁸ The term *feng* was also a metaphor for the (passing) personal influence of some men over others. For example, the *Analects* compared the influence of the princely man, or gentleman, to the wind (*feng*), which moved or bent the grass.²⁹ *Su* 俗, sometimes translated in English as “vulgar,” also pointed to local customs or vernacular practices. But here, *su* is used for those practices rooted in very specific locales, as when Ying Shao quipped, “Go a hundred miles (*li*) and the customs will be different.”³⁰ Taken together, *fengsu* may be thought of as the prevailing practices of various places and times.

In order to understand Ying Shao’s conception of ritual, it is also necessary to consider what counted as fashion (*fengsu*) in Ying Shao’s eyes. Interestingly, Ying Shao did not limit his discussion of fashion to popular culture or cults, but also subsumed a range of activities under this category, including but not limited to the rituals of sacrifice and mourning. In so doing, Ying Shao demoted ritual behavior to just one kind of custom, thereby turning the conventional hierarchy of ritual (*li* 禮) and custom (*su* 俗) on its head. By lumping ritual under the broader rubric of *fengsu*, Ying Shao also asserted that ritual represented the dominant practices of the moment.³¹ To put it differently, Ying Shao’s notion of ritual approximates the modern idea of fashion.

In rendering *fengsu* as “fashion,” the present discussion highlights the salient features of Ying Shao’s view of ritual by playing off the two senses of the English word—as common practice, more generally, and trends in apparel, more specifically. Though the latter sense may not immediately look like a match, it bears emphasis that Ying Shao’s discussion of ritual revolved around the mourner’s choice of clothes and accessories. Like a modern fashion commentator, Ying Shao reported not only whether someone had attended a funeral and for how long, but also what that person had worn. What was the cut of the sleeve of the mourner’s garment? What material had been used for the sash? Had the mourner required the support of a cane (a problem already seen in the second case)? Ying Shao’s preoccupation with clothes need not surprise us. After all, the act of mourning in China was synonymous with the wearing of mourning. In ancient times, the Chinese mourner was instantly recognizable from his or her dress, the rough garments of white hemp that signaled abstention from the pleasures of everyday life, such as sexual contact and convivial interaction, eating meat, and the trappings of office.³²

Besides underscoring the role of clothes and accessories, fashion (*fengsu*) captures the fact that Ying Shao claimed that ritual followed trends. This dimension of Ying Shao’s conception of ritual is evident from the second case. According to Ying Shao, Xue Qin had not been the only man who maintained

a stoic countenance at his wife's funeral. On the contrary, Xue Qin—who distinguished himself only with his boorish remarks—epitomized a broader fad, one that denied wives any ritual recognition at death. Similarly, Ying Shao presented the observance of mourning for unrelated parties as a modish practice. By his account, the practice became popular because men watched and imitated each other. Yang Zhi, for one, had felt pressure to conform to the crowd and to wear mourning for the chancellor's mother. As Yang reportedly told his friend, "Everyone else is doing it, so why should I alone be left out?" (*zhongren ruoci, buke du fou* 眾人若此, 不可獨否?).³³ What is more, high-status individuals, Ying Shao noted, played a critical role in initiating and reinforcing trends. Commenting on the case of Yang Zhi, Ying Shao reminded readers that less-exalted men looked to their social betters for guidance and emulated their actions in mourning. Consequently, Yang's conduct not only tainted the man's reputation, but it also, Ying Shao complained, misled many others.³⁴

Finally, Ying Shao highlighted the fact that, like any fashion, ritual choices could be controversial. Take the case of Mr. Wu. Much to Ying Shao's chagrin, his contemporaries were less than unanimous about the merits of Wu's actions. Though Ying Shao found such conduct contemptible, he acknowledged that Wu had won acclaim for quitting his official position to wear mourning for a patron, with some influential men interpreting the move as a sign of fine character. Similarly, Yang's contemporaries disagreed not only about whether Yang Zhi had erred, but they also diverged in their reasoning. As noted above, Yang Zhi's friend thought it had been inappropriate for Yang to wear mourning—because Yang's situation did not present an exact analogue to the precedent in the *Ritual Record*.³⁵ Ying Shao, in contrast, was indifferent to the gap between the classical precedent and the actual situation. For him, the matter was cut and dried: Yang should never have left office to wear mourning for someone who had not been a relative.

Given Ying Shao's notion of ritual fashions, it makes sense that he attributed errors in mourning to the lack of "ritual sense" (our word, not his, but one that builds off the different nuances of the term "fashion"). To get somewhat ahead of ourselves, Ying Shao explained the difference between the exemplary and obtuse mourner not merely in terms of what they wore but also in their reasoning. Whereas the exemplary mourner was resourceful when confronted with situations for which no ritual script existed, the obtuse mourner showed a lack of ingenuity. And whereas the smart mourner had good judgment about which trends to follow, his maladroit counterpart conflated what was right with what was à la mode. Finally, whereas the deft mourner made tactful decisions about his place at funerals, the doltish mourner overstepped his role.

To flesh out Ying Shao's understanding of ritual error, consider once again the case of Mr. Wu, who left office to wear mourning for a patron. A fresh look at this case reveals that Ying Shao found the man lacking ingenuity, surely a component of ritual sense. As noted above, Ying Shao had not accused the man

of violating any canonical rules. No such rules, in fact, existed, and the classics certainly offered no guidance on what someone was to do when faced with the death of a patron (something to be expected, of course, since the Han recommendation system postdated the classics by centuries). Ying Shao, however, believed that the silence of the classics hardly absolved a man from recognizing his late patron, something obvious from Ying Shao's complaints about men who made only brief appearances at the funerals of patrons.³⁶ Unfortunately, Ying Shao left readers guessing what Wu should have done (or better still, what Wu should have worn). For clues, one must turn to a similar case in "Screwing Up Ritual," in which Ying Shao stressed the importance of resourcefulness in matters ritual. As Ying Shao presented things, resourcefulness was critical when the mourner confronted unprecedented situations. As Ying Shao reminded his readers, the disciples of Confucius had been uncertain about what to do when the Master died. While the disciples had looked upon the Master as some kind of father, they questioned the wisdom of wearing a son's mourning for him. Inspired by the example of Confucius, who had previously mourned his favorite pupil as a son but without wearing mourning, the disciples came up with the following solution. They would refrain from wearing mourning, but only in public. In this way, Ying Shao said approvingly, they expressed their regard for the Master while safeguarding the distinction between kinsmen, on the one hand, and friends and teachers, on the other.³⁷

The second case, involving the mourning of wives, illuminates another aspect of Ying Shao's understanding of ritual error: namely, those without judgment were slaves to fads. In his presentation of this problem, Ying Shao pointed to two trends associated with the treatment of wives at funerals, one rooted in classical doctrine, and the other based on popular practice. Both trends, Ying Shao insisted, were to be avoided—something that only the discerning mourner would have known. To illustrate this point, Ying Shao related the examples of Chen Fan 陳蕃 (d. 168) and Yuan Wei 袁隗 (d. 190), two famous and well-respected officials. Unlike Xue Qin, Chen and Yuan had appeared reasonably sad when escorting their wives off to the end. And unlike Wang Gong, these men had refrained from using the cane for support. In this way, Ying Shao remarked, they averted the pitfalls of both trends, thereby coming "close to hitting at the core of ritual."³⁸

The final case reveals the importance Ying Shao assigned to tact, the last component of ritual sense. To return to Yang Zhi, was it really gauche of him to wear mourning for the chancellor's mother? After all, there was a classical precedent.³⁹ And though he acknowledged this precedent, Ying Shao felt strongly that it had not been Yang Zhi's place to wear mourning for the dead woman. According to Ying Shao, this should have been left to others, specifically, the nephew, presumably, the chancellor's next of kin.⁴⁰ In attempting to bring to life the precedent in the *Ritual Record*, Yang Zhi had overlooked the fact that the various degrees of mourning prevented men from overstepping

their roles at funerals.⁴¹ Had Yang Zhi possessed high “ritual IQ,” he would have realized that it was the nephew’s turn to rise to the occasion. As Ying Shao himself hinted, this was precisely what the nephew had attempted to do, for that nephew had returned to his native place to attend the woman’s burial.⁴² All of this, however, was lost on Yang Zhi. As Ying Shao complained, Yang Zhi’s ritual choices not only reflected poorly on him, but they also detracted from the nephew’s efforts to shine.⁴³

THINKING BEYOND YING SHAO

This chapter has analyzed Ying Shao’s diagnosis of ritual mistakes, arguing that the polemical author did not blame the failings of his contemporaries on violations of canonical rules. Instead, Ying Shao attributed errors to the mourner’s lack of good ritual sense, a claim related to his conception of ritual as one kind of *fengsu*, or fashion. In his eyes, a mourner without good ritual sense wore the wrong thing to the funeral because of his lack of resourcefulness, judgment, or tact.

The present discussion has been confined to reconstructing Ying Shao’s views of ritual. This, however, leaves several questions. First and more specifically, how representative was Ying Shao’s understanding of ritual? Did his contemporaries share his notion of mourning and other ceremonial practices? The matter deserves consideration because Ying Shao was something of an odd man. His definition of *li* as one kind of fashion or *fengsu* set him apart from other ancient authors. Second and more generally, how should scholars in the present think about the meaning of “behaving badly” in a ritual context? Should they write about bad behavior simply in terms of broken rules when ancient writers understood ritual misconduct in other terms?

While both of these matters lie outside the limited scope of this chapter, the authors would like to touch upon the second and more general question. They propose that Ying Shao’s ideas might pave the way for a broader rethinking about ritual, a move that follows the emerging trend of treating Chinese thinkers as theorists, as opposed to mere content providers for Western theory.⁴⁴ The angry man, in other words, may have been right.

Thinking about ritual fashions makes the controversies of the Han more understandable. Within the framework of rules, a judgment of ritual practice was straightforward, relatively speaking. Rules, after all, can be followed or broken (and sometimes bent). But good ritual sense was something that lay in the eye of the beholder. Just as opinions often divide about whether a star wore the right gown to the Oscars, the Han dynasty elite came to different conclusions about the appropriateness of their contemporaries’ attire at funerals.

This way of thinking about ritual mistakes has additional virtues: It captures the power of criticism, such as Ying Shao’s, to shape attitudes. To return to the example of fashion, while the experts often disagree about one gown or the

other, their opinions nevertheless follow general trends. Stars who deviate from those general trends—for instance, those who wear dresses prone to garment mishaps—face criticism (and jeers from Internet trolls). Similarly, members of the Han ruling elite were *not* free to express their grief in any way that they wished, lest they attract gossip. For example, rumors (and occasionally, penalties) awaited those suspected of conceiving children while in mourning.⁴⁵ Scrutiny furthermore attended men whose conduct varied too far from the prevailing practice—for example, men, such as the chancellor, who refused to quit their posts to observe mourning for their mothers. And like their modern counterparts who read fashion magazines and watch television commentaries, ancient men were attentive to buzz. Just as the approbation of an influential or articulate person could spur a trend, condemnation from the same quarters could put the brakes on a practice labeled uncouth or tacky.

Seeing ritual as fashion, finally, allows us to explain why ancient men labeled similar but not identical actions as wrong. For example, where did ancient men get the idea that it was off-limits to refrain from wearing any mourning for political patrons? This was not something that could be gleaned from perusing the classics. As with dress, much of ritual life and perceptions of unseemly behavior were products of social learning, or imitation. In the Han dynasty, ritual repertoires were transmitted not only within the familial context but also through broader social and political interactions. Funerals were moreover massive events, with as many as several tens of thousands in attendance. Such events involved not only close and extended family members, but also networks of colleagues, former subordinates, disciples, teachers, friends, and neighbors. Such mourners not only came to the internment in droves, but they also worked collaboratively, sometimes in the hundreds, to commission funerary inscriptions and to erect memorial stelae.⁴⁶ Seen from this perspective, it is logical that members of the Han elite acquired their sense of what was appropriate (or not) by watching their peers and associates and, in some cases, literally following the crowd.

The usefulness of this way of looking at ritual errors goes beyond the early Chinese context. The notion of cultural norms as fashion may explain why some behaviors were and are regarded as *wrong* even in the absence of formalized codes of conduct, etiquette books, or laws. To amplify this point, it may be helpful to provide, in closing, the following anecdote (apocryphal, of course). The tales of Ying Shao's contemporaries and their misdeeds call to mind the story of an associate dean. This associate dean showed up to a noon meeting of chairs and directors in a little black dress made by Ann Taylor. Certainly, there was no law against this, something pointed out by the male colleagues who heard the story. Besides, the dean had worn her dress well. But surely such a move was in poor taste. The female chairs in attendance rolled their eyes while the gentlemen ogled the occupant of the dress. And indeed, Ying Shao's complaints—like those about the dearly departed dean—reveal the complexities of a world where there were rituals without rules.

NOTES

1. Ying Shao, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/137. For this chapter, we also consulted the annotated edition by Wu Shuping.

2. Brown, *Politics of Mourning in Early China*, 44, 56, 72, 75, 76. See, for example, Brashier, *Public Memory in Early China*, 99; 47, 77–78, 165; Poo Mu-chou, “Preparation for the Afterlife,” 13–36, 24. For an older iteration of this view, see De Groot, *Religious System of China*, 482, 632.

3. For classicism in the late Western Han, see Nylan, “Classics without Canonization,” 721–776.

4. For the importance of filial displays for bureaucratic recruitment under the rubric of Filial and Incorrupt (*xiaolian* 孝廉), see Nylan, “Confucian Piety and Individualism in Han China,” 1–16. For “three years mourning,” see Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, chapter 2.

5. On Ying Shao’s background, see Nylan, “Ying Shao’s ‘Feng Su T’ung Yi.’”

6. Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 80/38.1614.

7. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, xv.

8. *Ibid.*, 19–68.

9. Ing, *The Dysfunction of Ritual in Early Confucianism*, 20–26.

10. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Social Practice*, 27.

11. Nylan, “Confucian Piety.” For a similar approach, see Holzman, *Poetry and Politics*.

12. Guolong Lai, “The Diagram of the Mourning System from Mawangdui,” 43–99. For a different discussion of competing norms, see Ing, *The Dysfunction of Ritual*, 8, 10, 91. See also Michael Puett’s discussion of ritual and norms in “Ritual and Ritual Obligations,” 543–550.

13. Yang Shuda, *Handai hunsang lisu kao*; Kamiya Noriko, “Gokan jidai ni okeru ‘karei’ o megutte iwayuru ‘gokanmatsu fūzoku’ saikō no kokoromi to shite,” 27–40; Yang Tianyu, “Lüelun Handai de sannian sang,” 63–69; Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*. See also Hardy, “The Reconstruction of Ritual,” 69–90.

14. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/145–147.

15. Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, 254. For the use of the *Chunqiu* as a source for judgment, see Sanft, “Dong Zhongshu’s *Chunqiu jueyu* Reconsidered,” 141–169.

16. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/147. The parallel in the classics can be found in *Jianben Chunqiu gongyang zhu* in *Chongkan Songben shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokan ji*.

17. *Ibid.*, 3/142.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.* Here, Ying Shao is paraphrasing *Yili shu*, 1/354b (*fuzai ze wei qi bu zhang*). The passage does not exactly call for men to use canes for wives; it just advises them against doing so when the husband’s father is still alive, the implication being that it would be all right to do so if the husband’s father had already died. The *Liji* does mention mourning for one’s wife in a few instances, but mostly wives are mentioned in reference to their male relatives (particularly progeny). The Tan Gong 檀弓 chapter implies that when a wife died, the husband wore one year of mourning for her. See *Liji jijie*, 11/289.

20. *Fengsu tongyi jiaoshi*, 3/142.

21. *Ibid.* See also Brown, *Politics of Mourning in Early China*, 14.

22. *Fengsu tongyi jiaoshi*, 3/149–51. This case has suffered from a high degree of textual corruption—for this interpretation, we have relied heavily upon Wu Shuping’s annotations in *Fengsu tongyi jiaoshi*, 3/110–113.

23. Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, chapter 3.
24. On this point, see Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, 98.
25. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 149–151.
26. For the classical precedent, see *Liji*, “Tan Gong xia,” 11/306.
27. Judging from the preface to the *Fengsu tongyi*, the title was original to Ying Shao. See *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, “xu 序,” 4.
28. Also see Xun Yue, *Qian Hanji*, 17/177. For *feng* in the sense of the environment, see Wang Chong, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 6.23/296.
29. *Lunyu zhengyi*, 183.
30. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, “xu,” 8.
31. Ibid.
32. Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, 13–14.
33. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/149.
34. Ibid., 3/151.
35. Ibid., 3/149. See the criticism of Humu Ban 胡毋班 (d. 190), listed as Humu Jipi 胡毋季皮.
36. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/162–166.
37. Ibid., 3/141; *Liji jijie*, “Tangong shang,” 8/197. For discussion of this passage, see Ing, *Dysfunction of Ritual*, 96–97.
38. *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/142.
39. *Liji jijie*, “Tan Gong xia,” 11/306.
40. This is inferred by Ying Shao’s claim that it was the nephew’s conduct (or precisely, his wearing of mourning) that should have alerted the chancellor to his bad conduct. On this point, see *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 3/151.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. On this point see Brown, “Returning the Gaze,” 41–87; Villagran and Brown, “Being in Time,” 181–205. Also see Trautmann, “The Past in the Present,” 2–20; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.
45. Consider the case of Zhao Xuan 趙宣 (fl. 150), a commoner who conceived six children while in mourning and was punished severely. On this point, see Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, 51. The official who condemned Zhao, however, never cited any classical prescriptions. Also, see the case of the father of Yuan He 袁賀, who was not punished even though there were rumors that he had conceived his son while in mourning. On this point, see Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, 52.
46. For the extended social network and large crowds, see Brown, *Politics of Mourning*, 43; chapter 4.

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BAD WRITING

Cursive Calligraphy and the Ethics of Orthography in the Eastern Han Dynasty

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Deviance is something that one only sees in the behavior of others. In our own behaviors, no matter how strange or perverse, we tend to easily discover rationale or justification. We domesticate our own actions within the realm of reason; it is the actions of others that strike us as inscrutable and unreasonable. No behaviors, in other words, are intrinsically bad; they only come to be seen as such through their encounters with others. Deviance, therefore, only materializes through dialogic encounters between the self and others, and every accusation against someone behaving badly must implicate a broader conversation over competing values. It was precisely these debates over the boundaries between reason and unreason, orthopraxy and heteropraxy, that were fundamentally constitutive of the intellectual history of early and medieval China.¹

This chapter considers one such accusation of bad behavior from the last decades of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220). This is a period rife with polemics against misbehaving individuals. As the dynasty gradually disintegrated after decades of sustained imperial rule, anxious calls to redefine orthodoxy in virtually all areas of life proliferated, and all sorts of bad behaviors were identified as both the symptom and the cause of the unraveling of the once good order of the empire. In this flurry of accusations of heteropraxy that populate the surviving texts of this period, there is a particularly unusual charge levied against the cursive script and those who practiced cursive calligraphy. It is an essay titled “Against Cursive Calligraphy” (“Fei caoshu” 非草書) by Zhao Yi 趙壹 (ca. 130–185). While this short piece contains only a few hundred characters, it nonetheless stands as one of the most vituperative attacks on bad behaviors from early and medieval China.² This text, with its withering criticism of the contemporary practice of cursive calligraphy, will be the focus of this chapter. The aim, however, is not just to offer a close reading of this text and understand why Zhao Yi was driven to condemn this otherwise celebrated tradition of cursive calligraphy. Rather, this

text is only a starting point. After a close reading of Zhao Yi's work, this chapter examines other contemporary texts of the late Eastern Han to reconstruct the broader dialogue within which such a scathing polemic against the cursive script and the practice of cursive calligraphy became imaginable.

With this attempt at reconstructing a world in which cursive calligraphers are miscreants and cursive calligraphy an object of scorn, I will also argue that in this long last century of the Eastern Han there was what one might call the development of an ethics of orthography.³ The written script was invested with a historical depth and moral complexity to a degree that we have not yet seen earlier in the tradition. But to what end? What might one possibly gain by moralizing the written graphs? What good behaviors did this ethics of orthography encourage, and what bad behaviors did it help to censure? The answers, of course, lie in the texts themselves, and it is to them that we shall now turn. The rest of this chapter will be divided into two parts. The first examines the aforementioned essay, "Against Cursive Calligraphy." To reconstruct the intellectual context for Zhao Yi's polemics, the second part discusses other texts from the Eastern Han, most importantly the "Configuration of Cursive Calligraphy" ("Caoshu shi" 草書勢) by Cui Yuan 崔瑗 (78–143).⁴ In the end, we will see what was at stake behind this orthographic turn in the intellectual history of the late Eastern Han, and how the simple pleasure of writing cursive had become, for some like Zhao Yi, a sure sign of moral deviance.

DEGENERATE SCRIPT FOR A DEGENERATE AGE: ON ZHAO YI'S "AGAINST CURSIVE CALLIGRAPHY"

Before analyzing Zhao Yi's short essay "Against Cursive Calligraphy," with its barrage of invective unleashed upon his contemporaries for their indulgence in this fledgling art form in the last decades of the Eastern Han, a word about the author and the text is in order. All that we know about Zhao Yi's life comes from his biography in the *History of the Later Han* (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書) compiled by Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445) in the early fifth century.⁵ It reports, first and foremost, that he is a native of Xi 西 County in the Hanyang 漢陽 commandery, which roughly corresponds to the southeastern part of the modern-day province of Gansu. He remained in his home commandery his whole life, despite no fewer than ten invitations to serve the imperial court. It was very likely that he was a local official for most of his career, but alas, the biography did not mention precisely which offices he had held. More certain is the fact that he was a figure who was both greatly admired and shunned by all those who knew him. Though a man of talent (in what, exactly, the biography does not say), Zhao Yi was also noted for being insufferably arrogant. His own village once banished him, and more than once he came close to being executed for running afoul of the law. The biography noted that there were sixteen pieces of his writings in circulation. Two of them were reproduced in full in the biography, and

they are both rhyme-prose (*fu* 賦) pieces that rework the familiar trope of a good poet in the midst of a perverted world unappreciative of his virtues.⁶ While the biography suggests that most of the late Eastern Han world saw Zhao Yi as someone who behaved badly, these two poetic pieces voice his defense: it was the rest of the world, not him, that was truly deviant.⁷

Unfortunately, there is no reference to the essay that we are interested in, namely “Against Cursive Calligraphy,” in this one and only biography of Zhao Yi. It may have been one of the sixteen compositions that Fan Ye attributed to him, but since he did not mention their titles and contents (except for the two poetic pieces that he included), we will never know. What spared “Against Cursive Calligraphy” from likely historical oblivion was the decision by the late-Tang dynasty literatus Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (fl. mid-ninth century) to anthologize it in his *Essential Records of the Art of Calligraphy* (*Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄). Copies of the essay must have circulated in the centuries between the end of the Eastern Han and the beginning of the Tang dynasty. When Zhang Yanyuan decided to compile this collection of writings on calligraphy from the Eastern Han to his own time, the first of its kind in the entire tradition, Zhao Yi’s “Against Cursive Calligraphy” was chosen as one of the thirty-nine pieces for inclusion. The popularity and prestige of this anthology must have widely expanded the circulation and readership of this essay, and from this point onwards, Zhao Yi’s diatribe will almost always be included in similar anthologies in subsequent centuries.⁸ Despite this great separation in time between Zhao Yi and the first evidence of the essay’s circulation, it is nevertheless generally accepted as an authentic composition. The language of the essay and details of his biography have furnished sufficient evidence for most scholars to have accepted it as his own words.⁹

The biographical sketches in the *History of the Later Han* painted Zhao Yi as a proud personality who could not help but be disdainful of the late Eastern Han world in which he had found himself. Nevertheless, even with this image of him as an upright curmudgeon, it is still surprising to see the unadulterated hostility in his confident condemnation of the cursive script in “Against Cursive Calligraphy.” Now, at long last, let us turn to the text itself. In the opening, Zhao Yi explains what prompted him to write this condemnation:

In my home commandery, there are men such as Liang Kongda and Jiang Mengying who count among the most learned scholars of our times. But yet, they admire Zhang Zhi’s cursive calligraphy more than they aspire to Confucius and [his disciple] Yan Yuan. Kongda would write pieces to show to Mengying; both recite the words of Zhang Zhi, copy his calligraphy pieces, and never tire of it. Since then, scholars vie with each other in their admiration of these two gentlemen, and even local officials compose pieces of their own. Everyone has a scroll of his own as his private plaything. I am fearful that this is something that goes against what is

proper, just for the sake of what is fashionable. It is not something that can broaden the Way and invigorate the world. I also recall how Luo Hui and Zhao Xi were once derided [by Zhang Zhi]. So, I am going to detail the history of this practice of cursive calligraphy, in order to offer some consolation to Luo and Zhao, and to lessen the influence of Liang and Jiang.¹⁰

Unfortunately, not much is now known about many of the contemporary figures that Zhao Yi mentioned in this preamble of the essay. Liang Kongda and Jiang Mengying are only remembered in later writings on calligraphy as two prominent students of Zhang Zhi; and nothing is known about Luo Hui and Zhao Xi, except for what Zhao Yi noted here. Zhang Zhi 張芝 (d. ca. 192), however, is the one exception. We do know that he came from a relatively prominent family, and unlike most of his peers, he did not assume an official post in the government of the Eastern Han in order to devote himself entirely to the art of calligraphy. He was also canonized as the progenitor of the so-called “modern cursive” calligraphy (*jin cao* 今草) that would become all the rage among the literati beginning in the early third century.¹¹

Despite our incognizance of these various figures, the message of this preamble is loud and clear. Zhao Yi was shining a spotlight on his benighted contemporaries who had their priorities all wrong. Rather than studying the teachings of Confucius and his disciples, they spent their time marveling at the cursive calligraphy of Zhang Zhi. The fanatical zeal of these two generally respected figures, Liang Kongda and Jiang Mengying, had spread like a virus, infecting virtually all scholars and officials in the world.

To help these men regain their proper priorities, Zhao Yi, in the next section of the essay, sets out to demystify cursive calligraphy by historicizing it. It is a curious sort of history because it is about both what cursive calligraphy was and what it was not:

As for the development of the cursive script, did it happen at a time close to antiquity? It was neither based on images from Heaven, nor was it based on revelations from the depths of the Yellow River and Luo River. It also was not an invention by the sages [in antiquity]. In the last years of the Qin Empire (221–207 BCE), draconian punishments and the byzantine bureaucracy gave rise to a staggering volume of official documents; ceaseless battles, on the other hand, led to a constant flow of war correspondences and a flurry of military dispatches. For this reason, the “clerical cursive” script (*zhang cao* 章草) was invented. It was only intended for expediency and speed. It evinces a principle of simplicity and expediency, and does not pertain to the work of sages.

In the first sentence here, the term “cursive script” is a translation of the term *caoshu* (草書), previously translated as “cursive calligraphy” in this chapter. In

the context of Zhao Yi's essay, the two are one and the same: it refers to both "cursive script" and "cursive calligraphy." And together they constitute the very thing whose vulgar origin he is trying to expose here. As a script, it is merely an abbreviated orthography invented in the recent past to meet the pedestrian demands of the bureaucracy of the failed Qin Empire.¹² Unlike the Confucian classics, which were compiled according to Heavenly images and earthly signs by sages in antiquity, and therefore embody proper understanding of the patterns of the cosmos, the cursive script is merely an utilitarian shorthand that has nothing to teach us about the world.¹³

Notice, also, that there is an implicit correlation between antiquity and orthodoxy in Zhao Yi's critique. The mere fact that the cursive script was a recent invention, far removed from antiquity (*gu* 古), already constitutes sufficient ground for its dismissal as an object worthy of our attention. Antiquity here is positively valorized at the expense of the present; sources of orthodoxy are assigned an exclusive temporal domain in antiquity, while any recent artifice must necessarily fall under the realm of heterodoxy. In the next section of the essay, Zhao Yi continues to elaborate upon this tacit temporal hierarchy:

Those who study cursive calligraphy today are ignorant of the fact that it is intended to be simple and expedient, but instead they regard the models of [the calligraphers] Du Du and Cui Yuan as miraculous displays. . . . Children, after they come of age and start to go to schools, all abandon [the ancient scripts invented by] Cang Jie and Scribe Zhou, and take Du Du and Cui Yuan as their models. In private, when they exchange letters, they are in the habit of saying that since they were pressed for time, they cannot write in cursive. The cursive script was originally intended for speed and expedience, but now it is thought to be difficult and time-consuming. They have largely misunderstood its basic principle.

Here, antiquity and the present are embodied in various legendary personalities, but the lesson is essentially the same. Zhao Yi bemoans the fact that in his time people have fallen under the spell of the beautiful handwriting of the two famed contemporary calligraphers Du Du 杜度 and Cui Yuan 崔瑗, while turning their backs on the classical, proper scripts used by Cang Jie 倉頡 and Scribe Zhou (Shi Zhou 史籀). Cang Jie is the legendary scribe for the Yellow Emperor credited with the first invention of writing in antiquity, while Scribe Zhou was reportedly responsible for a codification of the script, usually understood as the so-called seal script (*zhuan* 篆書), under the reign of Emperor Xuan of the Zhou dynasty (r. 828–782 BCE).¹⁴ Once again, Zhao Yi alleges that his contemporaries have their priorities all wrong: while they should follow the ancient script handed down to us by the great sages in antiquity, they instead lavish undue attention on the fashionable but hollow cursive script of their contemporaries. Worse yet, it is a fanaticism based on an erroneous understanding of the

idea of the cursive script, which was devised for expediency and never intended to be the time-consuming pursuit that it had become.

In the rest of the essay, Zhao Yi offers two additional arguments against this fanatical devotion to cursive calligraphy among his contemporaries. First, somewhat surprisingly, he argues that it is a skill that one is simply born with and cannot be acquired by practice. Just as we are all born with different physiological endowments, our penmanship is likewise an inborn attribute. “Whether your calligraphy is good or bad, how can it be forced? It is like the fact that some people have a beautiful appearance and some are just ugly, how can learning change any of that?” (書之好醜, 何為強哉。若人顏有美惡, 豈可學以相若耶). He goes on to say that these celebrated calligraphers, like Du Du, Cui Yuan, and Zhang Zhi, were already incredibly talented individuals to begin with, and they only happened to dabble in the art of cursive calligraphy in their spare time. It does not mean, however, that anyone can ever hope to attain the same height of artistic achievement, no matter how much they practice:

They devote themselves to the art of calligraphy exclusively, with firm determination and lofty aspiration. They do not even care that they are exhausted. They never have a moment of rest all day and all night, and do not even spare some time to eat. They go through a new brush every ten days, and several ink balls each month. Their collars and sleeves all are stained black with ink, and their teeth and lips are likewise constantly blackened. When they gather, they have no time for idle conversations; instead, they use their fingers to draw on the ground, or a blade of grass to write on the wall. Their arms and skin are all scratched up, their fingernails broken, and even when they appear like a fish with bleeding gills, they still do not care to rest. But this makes really no difference in how well or how poorly they write.

Interestingly, Zhao Yi here concedes that the works of these celebrated calligraphers are indeed marvelous, despite his argument that the script itself is really a vulgar thing. So, it is acceptable as a frivolous hobby for naturally talented men to pursue in their spare time. Those who are less talented wrongfully thought that they could be as good if only they had practiced enough. Just as they confused the proper priorities between antiquity and the present, favoring the corrupted orthography of the cursive script over the proper form of the ancient script, they also foolishly believed that they could equal the calligraphic mastery of Zhang Zhi. Their ignorance, therefore, is not limited to a single area but is systemic. Their unreasonable love of the cursive script is both a symptom and a cause of their folly. Their failure to prioritize lofty antiquity above the mundane present led to their investment in this unattainable art of cursive calligraphy. In turn, their devotion to this vulgar orthography entirely devoid of the proper teachings of the ancients further deepened their already profound ignorance.

These men are foolish and they look foolish, ragged and exhausted, with blackened teeth and lips, and garments dyed with ink.

Zhao Yi gave one more argument against cursive calligraphy before the end of the essay. It is an entirely utilitarian one, alleging that it is basically useless for the advancement of one's official career or contributing to the good order of the world at large. "Men devoted to the art of cursive calligraphy are more or less petty artisans" (且草書之人，蓋伎藝之細者耳). He goes on to argue that it is not a skill deemed valuable for official appointments at any level from the local villages to the capital. "If you are skilled in this, you will not attain any official position; if you are bad at it, it also won't do any harm to the good order of the world. Based on this, isn't it just a petty thing?" (善既不達於政，而拙無損於治，推斯言之，豈不細哉). Even though cursive calligraphy is a truly frivolous craft, these foolish men insist on elevating it from a mere bureaucratic necessity to an object of artistic endeavor.

In the closing words of the essay, Zhao Yi exhorts his contemporaries to devote their attention to more worthy endeavors, like studying the classics of the sages, the movements of the planets, or understanding the spirits, so that they can "observe the mind of Heaven and Earth, and to arrive at the dispositions of the sages" (覽天地之心，推聖人之情). And with that, they can correctly distinguish between right and wrong and contribute to the making of an orderly, harmonious world. "At worst, you can protect yourself and leave behind a good name, and at best, you can serve the ruler of the world and help achieve peace; to live one's life in this way, and to serve as a model for later generations, isn't this a profound [achievement]?" (窮可以守身遺名，達可以尊主致平，以茲命世，永鑑後生，不亦淵乎). With this final rhetorical flourish, Zhao Yi concluded his diatribe.

As mentioned earlier, Zhao Yi's polemics are rather anomalous. There was nothing quite like this before his time, and no one will ever write such a diatribe against the art of cursive calligraphy again. Throughout the essay, we see a consistent valorization of antiquity that is foundational to the different arguments that he made. Sages in antiquity and the work that they had passed down to us, most importantly the classics as well as the ancient script that they were written in, constitute the totality of all that is worthy of one's study. All that falls outside of this purview he finds largely frivolous. The cursive script and cursive calligraphy, as a recent invention that deliberately abbreviates the proper orthography of the ancient script of the sages, are at best irrelevant and at worst inimical to our proper edification. And with this vision, Zhao Yi saw nothing but men behaving badly, writing cursive calligraphy, all around him.

TOWARD AN ETHICS OF ORTHOGRAPHY IN THE EASTERN HAN

There is very little information that can help us contextualize Zhao Yi's "Against Cursive Calligraphy." We know basically nothing about the circumstances of its composition and circulation, and with his biography in the *History of the Later*

Han as a basis, the only thing we can be certain of is that this text was written sometime around the mid-second century during either the reign of Emperor Huan (r. 147–167) or Emperor Ling (r. 168–189). Given our knowledge of the intellectual history of these few decades of the Eastern Han, several plausible contexts for Zhao Yi's essay do come to mind. We can, for instance, situate it within the fierce debate over the classical canon and the curriculum of the Imperial Academy (*taixue* 太學) that had embroiled much of the literati world for much of the Eastern Han.¹⁵ Another possibility is to situate it within the “conflict of taste” between classical austerity and ornate extravagance that had dominated court politics in these few decades under the reigns of Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling, as Martin Powers has so vividly demonstrated.¹⁶ In fact, much of the scholarship on this piece—whether in Chinese, Japanese, or English—appeals to one or both of these well-established contexts, with Zhao Yi largely painted as a cultural conservative who coincidentally gave us a vivid snapshot of the cursive craze among the literati of this period. David Knechtges, in what is the most extensive discussion of this essay in English-language scholarship, situates it within the contentious court culture, the “clash of cultures and taste,” between those within and without the Hongdu Gate School (*Hongdu xue men* 鴻都學門) founded under Emperor Ling in the 170s. More specifically, he noted how Zhao Yi's objection to the practice of cursive calligraphy is resonant with other literati's objection to the so-called bird script (*niaozhuan* 鳥篆), a flowery ornamental calligraphy favored by scholars of the Hongdu Gate School.¹⁷ These readings are variously illuminating, but I do think there is more to the story than Zhao Yi just being a guardian of conservative taste. Rather than situating Zhao Yi within one of these supposed intellectual currents of the late Eastern Han, another strategy is to listen to his possible interlocutors to reconstruct the broader dialogues that they were engaged in. Instead of locating Zhao Yi within a preexisting context, we can instead constitute a new context on the basis of the debate between Zhao Yi and his interlocutors to add to the intellectual history of this period.

Within the relatively vast literary corpus of the long second century, where should we begin? Fortunately, as a polemical piece that actually named names, Zhao Yi has already pointed us toward the most immediate of his intended interlocutors. Many of them are now largely obscure figures who did not leave behind any writings, but there is one key exception. It is the celebrated calligrapher Cui Yuan (ca. 78–143) from the generation that preceded Zhao Yi.¹⁸ Recall that Zhao Yi deplored the fact that his contemporaries admired Cui Yuan's cursive calligraphy more than they did the ancient scripts of Cang Jie and Scribe Zhou. A renowned writer in his own time, Cui Yuan left behind a modest corpus of poetry and essays that include a short poem in praise of the art of cursive calligraphy called the “Configuration of Cursive Script” (“Caoshu shi” 草書勢). Though generally accepted as an authentic text written by Cui Yuan sometime in the first decades of the second century, we know nothing about the

circumstances of its composition and circulation.¹⁹ We do not know if Zhao Yi was responding to this text in “Against Cursive Calligraphy,” but as we shall see, a juxtaposition of these two texts separated by a few decades gives us important insight into what might have motivated Zhao Yi to have critiqued cursive calligraphy as a deplorable form of deviant behavior.

In this ode to the aesthetic pleasure of cursive calligraphy, Cui Yuan begins with a history of writing, from its invention to the introduction of the cursive script:

The invention of writing started with Cang Jie. He drew these bird tracks in order to arrest the proper patterns [of the cosmos]. In later ages, writings proliferated. Times were often out of joint, with regimes replacing one another in quick succession. Government affairs were in ruins, and brushes and ink were destroyed. So, the clerical script was invented, and old characters were abbreviated. As for the cursive script, its principle represents a further attempt at simplification. It is expedient and spells out only the essentials. It is used at moments of utmost urgency.

There is very little here with which Zhao Yi would disagree. Writing was a sagely invention in distant antiquity, not only as a mere transcription of human speech but a graphic translation of cosmic patterns (*wenzhang* 文章). Writings proliferated in subsequent ages, but through the ravages of time, with all the chaos that we had brought upon the world, the script had to be pared down. And eventually, this leads to the most recent introduction of the cursive script. While this is precisely the moment that Zhao Yi declared the cursive script to be a hollow instrument, entirely disconnected from the intent of the sages from antiquity, Cui Yuan thought otherwise: “The cursive script has many uses and applications, and it saves time and energy. It represents a transformation [of the script] for pure expediency. Must it follow the model of the ancients?” (兼功並用，愛日省力；純儉之變，豈必古式). For Zhao Yi, the corrupt orthography of the cursive script represents a rupture from the proper orthography that past sages invented for our moral edification. For Cui Yuan, however, there was never such a rupture; the cursive script is simply a most recent transformation of the original script invented by the sages in antiquity. It is different by historical necessity, but it is not any less legitimate. Cui Yuan goes even further in the rest of this poem to make a grand claim for this new script:

Observe its [i.e., cursive script and calligraphy] principles and images; there is a standard to its movements. The squares do not have the right angles, and the circles are not properly centered. The brushstrokes press down on the left and lift up on the right; when looking at them, it is as if they are all askew; like beasts crawling on the ground or perching birds on the verge of flight. Or like a clever rabbit that, suddenly frightened, is about to bolt away but has not yet picked up speed.

Cui Yuan is now far removed from Zhao Yi's conservative vision that sees the cursive script as a grab bag of utilitarian shortcuts, with none of the edifying coherence and significance that pertain to the proper orthography of the ancient script. Cui Yuan readily admitted that it is a recent artifice, born out of historical necessity of the new empires, but, nevertheless, it does have its own coherence and integrity. Just because it is an abbreviated form of the orthography of the ancients, it is not necessarily corrupt and deficient. It has a "standard" (*yi* 儀), as he asserts, and its seemingly relaxed structure and free-flowing brushstrokes actually mimic movements found in nature. While the ancient script invented by Cang Jie embodies and captures the proper patterns of the cosmos (*yi ding wenzhang* 以定文章), the cursive script represents the dynamic motions in nature in ways that the ancient script cannot. He sees and admires a certain aesthetic, naturalistic grace in its very asymmetry. There is no hierarchy of significance between the ancient script and the cursive script, as Zhao Yi would have insisted, but the two complement one another. They are both written graphs that were inspired by, and at the same time aspire to embody, the patterns in and of nature, with one being more attentive to things in motion and the other to objects at rest. As he bluntly puts it: "Must it follow the model of the ancients?" (豈必古式). The orthographic deviation of the cursive script is not a sign of corruption but an innovation that makes it as significant as the ancient script of the sages.

In the rest of the ode, Cui Yuan piles on more natural imagery to elaborate on this very point, namely the cursive script's edifying mimicry of motions in the natural world. Despite its historical origin as an expedient shorthand, cursive calligraphy is an orthography devised to represent, and therefore to help us understand, the dynamic movements of things. Towards the end, he proclaims that every single brushstroke is in its right place, just where it should be, or in his own words, "not a single brushstroke can be placed anywhere else" (一畫不可移). Cursive calligraphy is not just expedient scribbles but rigorous constructs that pertain to "timely subtlety and essential wonders" (機微要妙). Tacit in this celebration of the cursive script, furthermore, is the elevation of the cursive calligraphers into the category of the sages. In the distant past, Cang Jie exercised his sagely perception of nature, and then invented writings accordingly; today, Cui Yuan and others have cultivated cursive calligraphy to eloquently relate their perception of the dynamic movements in the cosmos. They are trying to do exactly what Cang Jie had done before, though with the benefits of his pioneering effort. Cursive calligraphy, therefore, is an instrument for its practitioners to become modern-day sages.

To these grandiose claims, the Zhao Yi that we know from "Against Cursive Calligraphy" would have nothing but scorn and derision. Utterly nonsensical, he would have thought with great exasperation. While this ode by Cui Yuan is but a single text, nevertheless its sharp contrast to Zhao Yi's essay is sufficient for us to start approximating the debate, the dialogic space, within which the latter's condemnation of cursive script and cursive calligraphy

became intelligible and meaningful.²⁰ In these two texts, we see two diametrically opposed interpretations of the cursive script as an orthographic technology for moral cultivation and classical learning founded on a broader disagreement over our proper relationship to antiquity. Zhao Yi regards the ancient script invented and then modified by various sages, from Cang Jie to Scribe Zhou, as a faithful repository of their teachings based on their proper understanding of the cosmos. Adherence to the orthography of this ancient script is therefore tantamount to preserving our access to their teachings. By the same token, a thoughtless abbreviation of this ancient script, like the cursive script, represents an orthographic corruption that would impair our ability to recover their teachings. This stance is abundantly clear in Zhao Yi's lamentation that cursive "does not pertain to the work of the sages" (非聖人之業). Cui Yuan, on the other hand, regards the ancient script as an orthographic foundation first laid down by the sages that the Eastern Han literati of today might innovate upon to achieve precisely what their forebears had achieved in antiquity, namely to represent and understand the patterns in and of the cosmos. For him, it is not a matter of recovering the original teachings of the sages from antiquity, but appropriating and adapting their ancient orthographic technology to try to become sages in our own time. It was in this debate over our proper relation to antiquity, and the nature and uses of orthography, that the cursive script, cursive calligraphy, and cursive calligraphers were constituted as polemical objects in the long second century.²¹

There was, therefore, an ethics of orthography that emerged in the late Eastern Han dynasty. Orthography became moralized, and the practice of calligraphy emerged as a site for ethical valuation. Orthographic knowledge was a vehicle for ethical cultivation, and choices between alternative scripts became a moral issue, involving competing understanding of our relationship to antiquity, the goals of learning, and the possibility of sagehood in the present. With his commitment to this ethics of orthography, Zhao Yi ascribed great moral significance to the practice of calligraphy, and all that he saw in cursive script was evidence of men behaving very badly. These men, according to Zhao Yi, failed to see that the fashionable cursive script was a corrupt orthography that had unraveled the sagely teachings embodied in the ancient script. Men, he despaired, devoted all their energy to its practice, even though they would never get better, and it would never give them anything worthwhile, be it an enlightened understanding of the world or a rewarding official position within the bureaucracy. Their unreasonable fanaticism for cursive calligraphy clearly signaled to Zhao Yi their moral failings and ethical deviances.

This debate over the ethics of orthography, or the moralization of the script, in the late Eastern Han dynasty was certainly not limited to these writings by Zhao Yi and Cui Yuan. One can cite, for example, the compilation of the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 by Xu Shen 許慎 (d. ca. 147), with its emphasis on the "graphic etymologies" of the script, as yet another argument for recovering

past teachings of the sages through ancient orthography.²² Another relevant episode is the creation of the so-called Xiping Stone Classics (*Xiping shi jing* 熹平石經), a series of stone stele with inscriptions of the Confucian Classics in three different scripts, namely the “ancient” (*gu* 古), “seal” (*zhuan* 篆), and “clerical” (*li* 隸) scripts. Commissioned by the imperial court in the 170s, and then erected outside the Imperial Academy in the capital city of Luoyang, they were meant to serve as the official orthographic standard of classical learning.²³ The calligraphy on these stone stele was done by Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–192) whose effusive writings on the pleasure of the art of calligraphy would have provided a counterpoint to the polemics of Zhao Yi.²⁴ A full history of this orthographic turn in the intellectual history of the late Eastern Han dynasty that takes into account all of these different texts and personalities is a considerable project for another time.²⁵ For now, thanks to Zhao Yi, who cared to write down his exasperation with the obsessive writing of cursive calligraphy in his time, we get to see how deconstructing orthography was one way to gauge bad behavior in the late Eastern Han.

NOTES

1. For this conceptualization of deviance and heteropraxy I am drawing on the works by Stephen Greenblatt, especially his study of charges of heresy and atheism, which was “almost always thinkable only as the thought of another” in late sixteenth-century England. See his essay “Invisible Bullets” in *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 21–65, esp. 22. This understanding of deviance was also elaborated in his earlier work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, esp. 74–114, which in turn drew on the theoretical framework on the consignment of deviances to the others laid out by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, esp. 257–292.

2. For the text of Zhao Yi’s “Against Cursive Calligraphy,” see *Lidai shufa lunwen xuan*, 1–4.

3. While the term “orthography” is more typically used to refer to the conventional spelling of an alphabetic script, I use it here to refer to the correct graphic form of the logographic characters of the written Chinese language. See similar usage of the term in the recent publications by Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*, and Richter, “Textual Identity and the Role of Literacy in the Transmission of Early Chinese Literature,” 206–238.

4. The translation of the term “shi” 勢 as “configuration” in the title follows the entry on this text by Cui Yuan in Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, 178. On the idea of a reconstruction of intellectual context, I refer to the methodological consideration in Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” 3–53.

5. Zhao Yi’s biography is one entry in the group biography “Wenyuan liezhuan” 文苑列傳, in Fan, *Hou Hanshu*, 80.2628–2635.

6. These are the two famous poems “Ci shi ji xie fu” 刺世疾邪賦 and the “Qiong niao fu” 窮鳥賦 attributed to Zhao Yi. See Fan, *Hou Hanshu*, 80.2629–2631. They are variations of the familiar trope of the frustrated scholars that was first articulated in the *Chuci* 楚辭, especially the “Lisao” 離騷, as well as the “Fu pian” 賦篇 in the *Xunzi* 荀子 (ca. third century

BCE) and the “Fu niao fu” 服鳥賦 by Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168 BCE); see Wilhelm, “The Scholar’s Frustration,” 310–319, and Knechtges, “Riddles as Poetry,” 1–31.

7. For the purpose of this chapter, this brief sketch of Zhao Yi’s life will suffice. For more details, and the recent debate on Zhao Yi’s biography, see Zhao Kuifu, “Zhao Yi shengping bulun,” 1–8, which is a retort to the controversial series of articles by Jiang Bo 江波 that suggest a much later date for Zhao Yi beyond the end of the Eastern Han. See Jiang Bo, “Hou Hanshu Zhao Yi zhuan bianwu,” 148–155; “Zhao Yi shengzu nian kaolun,” 57–62. On the whole, I follow the consensus (*contra* Jiang Bo) that Zhao Yi is a late Eastern Han figure, with an official career that largely overlapped with the reign of Emperor Ling (r. 168–189).

8. For a history of Zhang Yanyuan’s anthology *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄, including its circulation and reception in the centuries since its compilation, see Qian Naijing, “*Fashu yaolu* yanjiu.”

9. In a series of three articles in the late 1990s to the year 2000, Zhang Tiangong 張天弓 argued that “Against Cursive Calligraphy” was a later forgery. See his article “‘Fei caoshu’ zhiyi,” 114–18. This is the only attempt to disprove Zhao Yi’s authorship in the entire body of scholarship on Zhao Yi and his writings. For a great summary of the arguments, ensuing responses, and an effective rebuttal, see Jiang Bo, “Zhao Yi yanjiu,” 114–119.

10. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. For Zhao Yi’s essay, I have consulted, and benefited greatly, from the partial translation by Knechtges, “Court Culture in the Late Eastern Han,” 9–40, esp. 32–33. It is the only translation of this text published in English.

11. The earliest extant text that explicitly refers to Zhang Zhi as the inventor of the “modern cursive” is the “Caoshu zhuang” 草書狀 by none other than Xiao Yan 蕭衍, Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty (r. 502–549). After the eighth century, when Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 ascribed the same role to Zhang Zhi in his monumental history of the art of calligraphy, namely the *Shu duan* 書斷, Zhang Zhi’s canonical role would never be contested again in all later genealogies of the art of calligraphy. See *Lidai shufa lunwen xuan*, 79 and 177.

12. Clearly, for Zhao Yi, this “clerical cursive” that became popular under the Qin Empire is the precursor for the even more free-flowing cursive practiced by the likes of Zhang Zhi and his followers. For this development from clerical cursive to the so-called modern cursive, see Qiu Zi, *Zhongguo shanggu shufa shi*, 500–514.

13. Zhao Yi’s wording is obviously a reference to the famous passage from the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 (“Commentary on Attached Phrases”), an appendix to the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*). It argues that the sages in antiquity compiled this classic according to the images that Heaven manifests to us, as well as diagrams and documents that emerged from the Yellow River and Luo River. Also see the useful discussion in Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*, 86–90; Peterson, “Making Connections,” 67–116.

14. The legend of the invention of writing, with Cang Jie and Scribe Zhou assuming various roles, started to appear in late Warring States and Han texts, such as the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, and the preface to *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 by Xu Shen 許慎. For a summary of these early legends, see Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System*, 129–155.

15. More specifically, there is the so-called Old Text/New Text (*guwen jinwen* 古文今文) controversy that supposedly divided the literati into two opposing factions over the classical canons and their interpretations. Its historicity has been subjected to various de-

bates in recent decades. See Nylan, "The 'Chin Wen/Ku Wen' Controversy in Han Times," 83–145; Van Ess, "The Old Text/New Text Controversy," 146–170, and "The Apocryphal Texts of the Han Dynasty and the Old Text/New Text Controversy," 29–64. For a more general survey of the history of the establishment and debates over the classical canon, see Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 337–365; Wang Baoxuan, *Xi-Han jingxue liuyuan*.

16. Martin Powers, *Art and Political Expression in Early China*, 334–370. See also Knechtges, "Court Culture in the Late Eastern Han." On this subject, I have also benefited from the study by Michael Loewe, "The Failure of the Confucian Ethic in Later Han Times," 249–266, and the Introduction to Ch'i-Yün Ch'en, *Hsün Yüeh and the Mind of Late Han China*, 3–53.

17. Knechtges, "Court Culture in the Late Eastern Han," 26, 31–33.

18. Like Zhao Yi, Cui Yuan's one and only biography is in the *Later History of the Han*. See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 52.1722–1724. See also the useful biographical note in Knechtges and Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, 175–178.

19. It was preserved thanks to its inclusion in Wei Heng's 衛恆 (d. ca. 292) *Configurations of the Four Scripts* (*Si ti shu shi* 四體書勢) compiled in the late third century. See *Lidai shufa lunwen xuan*, 16–17. This chapter utilizes Gan Zhongliu and Shi Lanfu's critical edition, "Cui Yuan 'Caoshu shi' zhuxi," 60–61.

20. The concept of a "dialogic space" is adapted from the works of Mikhail M. Bakhtin, especially the essay "Discourse in the Novel," where he proposes that we understand the significance of a text "against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme." It is collected in the volume *The Dialogic Imagination*, 259–422, esp. 281.

21. Cf. Puett, "Listening to Sages," 271–281. In this article, Puett argues that Wang Chong (27–100) encourages his Eastern Han contemporaries to aim to become sages themselves, rather than always subjugating themselves to the authority of the classics. It is a similar argument that I have attributed to Cui Yuan, namely that we do not always have to defer to the ancients and can well become sages ourselves. Elsewhere, Puett has also argued convincingly for a shift towards a "strong sense of belatedness vis-à-vis the sages of the past" during the late Eastern Han, which resonates with my interpretation of Zhao Yi's "Against Cursive Calligraphy" in this chapter. See his "The Belatedness of the Present," 177–190, esp. 188–190.

22. I borrow the term "graphic etymologies" in relation to the *Shuowen jiezi* from the great article by Françoise Bottéro and Christopher Harbsmeier, "The *Shuowen jiezi* Dictionary and the Human Sciences in China," 249–271.

23. Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 79A.2547. For an overview of the Xiping Stone Classics, see Luo Fuyi, "Xiping shijing gaishuo," 5–31.

24. The two essays "On Brush" ("Bi lun" 筆論) and "Nine Configurations" ("Jiu shi" 九勢) are usually accepted as authentic pieces by Cai Yong. See *Lidai shufa lunwen xuan*, 5–8. See also the discussion of late Han writings on calligraphy, including these pieces by Cai Yong, in Egan, "Nature and Higher Ideals in Texts on Calligraphy, Music, and Painting," 277–309, esp. 277–291.

25. Imre Galambos has already contributed a key piece of this history in his discussion of the Eastern Han movement to standardize orthography. See his article "The Myth of the Qin Unification of Writing in Han Sources," 181–203, and the aforementioned monograph *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*, esp. 31–64.

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WILD YOUTHS AND FALLEN OFFICIALS

Falconry and Moral Opprobrium in Early Medieval China

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The history of falconry in China is one of the oldest in the world, stretching back to the second century CE when raptors were used in the hunt by elites throughout the Han Empire. The sport is vividly depicted on Eastern Han tomb and mortuary shrine reliefs (first–second century CE) and later painted tomb bricks excavated at Jiayuguan 嘉峪關 and Gaotai 高臺, Gansu (third–fifth century CE), which shows the use of hawks and falcons on horseback or on foot often assisted by greyhound-like hounds.¹ Falconry and falconry enthusiasts are also mentioned in different second to sixth century CE texts, which lack the sport's noble associations in other cultures and concentrate on what polemicists claimed were its negative moral and social effects. Focusing on recorded falconry enthusiasts and passages in which the sport is criticized, this chapter surveys early textual evidence for the practice of falconry in China, arguing that the majority of texts consider the sport to be a social vice associated with corrupt officials, wild youths, and other unsavory characters, as well as symptomatic of the general breakdown of social order.

The earliest textual reference to falconry, in Zhang Heng 張衡's (78–139) "Xijing fu 西京賦" (Rhapsody of the Western Capital), and attitudes toward the hunt in pre-Han and Han China form the core of later moral diatribes against the use of raptors in the hunt. Texts from the fourth through sixth century associate falconry with individuals of dubious moral character and further connect the sport to social and political collapse. Other texts represent Buddhist attitudes toward the use of raptors in the hunt and several antifalconry passages in the *Wei Shu* 魏書 (*Book of Wei*) by Wei Shou 魏收 (506–572) are best understood from a Buddhist perspective and include outright proscriptions of the sport.

THE IMPERIAL HUNT AND EARLY ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING

Falconry first appears in textual sources in the context of imperial hunts and their accompanying memorializing and moralizing *fu* 賦 (rhapsodies), which also provide the general background to the proper and improper roles that the hunt was argued to serve in early China.² Two of the earliest passages concerning the use of falconry in imperial hunts are found in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han Dynasty*), which was written by Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445) in the fifth century but was based on earlier sources. The text records the use of hawks and hounds in grand imperial hunts held by Empress Deng 鄧 (81–121 CE) and Emperor Ling 漢靈帝 (156–181 CE) in the second century.³ But the very earliest textual reference to falconry occurs in the “Xi-jing fu” by Zhang Heng, which describes the splendor of the old Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE) capital of Chang’an and the imperial hunts held in Shanglin Park 上林園:

Birds have no time to fly away; Beasts have no chance to flee.
 Blue-necked goshawks snatch birds beneath the gauntlets;
 Hanlu hounds snap at hares from the end of their tethers.
 As soon as the fierce beasts toss their shaggy manes, Cast angry
 glances from piercing eyes,
 They have overawed and daunted even the guar and tiger, And none
 dares to withstand them.⁴

Zhang Heng’s rhapsody most likely references the goshawk, a raptor that historically was the most popular bird of prey used in Chinese falconry, and the gauntlet, a glovelike object that protects the falconer’s lower arm and wrist from the sharp talons of a raptor. Other details regarding the technical aspects of imperial falconry are lacking, although the location and spectacle-like nature of Han imperial hunts is well attested to in textual sources.

Empress Deng and Emperor Ling’s hunts were held in the new Shanglin Park, the imperial hunting park outside the capital of Luoyang, which was constructed along the line of its famous Western Han predecessor of the same name and the location of the hunt described by Zhang Heng. Shanglin Park was conceived of as an encyclopedic menagerie and microcosm of empire and the setting of theatrical ritualized violence in which the emperor conquered the terrestrial as well as celestial realms.⁵ As Thomas T. Allsen has shown, the political, social, and economic function of these parks share parallels with Achaemenid *paridaida* (enclosure/domain), from which the English word “paradise” is derived. Like the parks of the Achaemenids and other Eurasian elite, Han hunting parks were symbols of sovereignty constructed as artificial environments and arenas for carefully staged hunts.⁶ Smaller elite and royal parks are mentioned

in sources after the fall of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), but it was not until the Tang (618–907) that such grandiose hunting parks were once again constructed under imperial auspices.⁷ Although sources provide no details about where the birds used in Han imperial hunts came from, who cared for them, or how they were housed, their inclusion in second century CE imperial hunts suggests that some birds were received as tribute, were cared for in the imperial mews by specialists employed by the government, and were part and parcel of the pomp and circumstance of the imperial hunt.⁸

The imperial hunt was first memorialized in Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (179–127 BCE) "Rhapsody on the Imperial Hunt" (Tian zi youlie fu 天子遊獵賦), of which the above section of the "Xijing fu" is a successor. Although initially these rhapsodies appear to celebrate the hunt's ritualized violence, they include passages that are clearly critical of these spectacles. For example, at the close of Sima Xiangru's rhapsody, the emperor absconds from hunting and concludes by "sporting in the Park of Six Arts" (*liuyi zhi you* 六藝之囿).⁹ The Six Arts are identified in the *Zhou li* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*) as (1) social and ritual etiquette (*li* 禮); (2) music (*yue* 樂); (3) archery (*she* 射); (4) chariot driving (*yu* 禦); (5) writing (*shu* 書); and (6) mathematics (*shu* 數). According to Sima Xiangru, these are the appropriate pastimes of a wise and benevolent ruler.

The antihunting rhetoric of these rhapsodies places them in a larger group of polemical texts arguing against excessive elite hunting and imperial hunting parks, although not necessarily against the hunt itself. In pre-Han and Han China hunting was a status-defining elite pastime that provided meat for sacrifices to the ancestors and served as a form of military training and symbolic warfare and was a potent symbol of imperial and elite power and decorum.¹⁰ In fact, two of the Six Arts referenced by Sima Xiangru—archery and chariot driving—were also closely connected to elite hunting in pre-Han China.¹¹ Perhaps because of falconry's initial associations with imperial hunts, early authors saw the sport as less connected to appropriate displays of elite authority and instead as signifying waste, excess, and ritual impropriety.

CONSERVATIVE POLEMICS

Court-sponsored histories, poetry, and philosophical writings from the third through sixth centuries display a growing number of polemical passages against falconry that are based on earlier lists of elite extravagances.¹² The largest trope within these texts is the inclusion of falconry among a list of elite vices enjoyed by persons of ill repute—corrupt officials, wild youths, and other morally and ritually depraved individuals. For example, in the *Hou Han shu* biography of Liang Ji 梁統 (d. 159 CE), a corrupt power-hungry figure who dominated the Eastern Han government for almost two decades, we are told: "It was his nature to be fond of wine. He was capable with the bow, playing chess, *gewu*, *li-ubo*, kick ball, and liked gambling. He also enjoyed hunting with hawks and

hounds, racing horses, and cockfights.”¹³ The viewpoint that falconry was one of several elite vices, such as gambling or racing horses, is found in other works as well. For example, in the “Outer Chapters 外篇” of the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (*The Master Who Embraces Simplicity*), which are concerned with social and political philosophy and criticism, Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) condemns a similar list of social vices including racing horses, hunting with hawks and hounds, gambling, and theatrical plays.¹⁴ In the *Baopuzi*, falconry and the use of hounds in the hunt are a small subset of a larger group of elite excesses of which the abuse of alcohol, sex, and drugs are paramount and for Ge are signs of the contemporary breakdown of social customs, mores, and political order.

Ge’s combination of social vices was not a new formulation. Gambling, racing horses and hounds, cockfighting, and enjoying plays were criticized earlier in the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*), traditionally attributed to the Han dynasty scholar and official Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179–104 BCE). In Chapters 58, “Wu xing xiang sheng 五行相生 (The Mutual Production of the Five Phases),” and 59, “Wu xing xiang sheng 五行相勝 (The Mutual Succession of the Five Phases),” each of the five phases is associated with one of the senior officials of the state. Chapter 59 sketches a sequence in which each of these ministers is “overcome” or punished by the minister associated with the following phase after an enumeration of the minister’s faults, which deviate from the official’s responsibilities and may serve as illustrative categories of negative behavior. The promotion of these elite extravagances—gambling, racing horses and hounds, cockfighting, and enjoying plays—is listed among the faults of a degenerate Minister of Agriculture.¹⁵

Falconry was added to this enumeration of elite vices serving as a marker for a certain type of person or behavior and also could be used in defaming individuals accused of not following their official or military duties. A good example of this is found in the “Biography of Geng Gong 耿恭” in the *Dongguan Han ji* 東觀漢記 (*Records of the Han from the Dongguan Library*), an Eastern Han text begun by Ban Gu 班固 (32–92). Geng Gong was a successful Eastern Han military commander who led campaigns in the Western Regions 西域, but was caught up in court intrigue, falsely accused, arrested, and dismissed. In the *Dongguan Han ji*, these accusations include enjoying hawks and hounds and plays by the roadside.¹⁶

The connection between falconry, vice, and social disorder is also echoed in later texts and connected to the activities of wild youths. One of the earliest texts associating falconry with wild youths is the *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (*Miscellanies of the Western Capital*). This third- to fourth-century compilation of semi-historical tales, often attributed to Ge Hong, takes place in the Western Han capital of Chang’an. The *Xijing zaji* describes a wild youth from Maoling 茂陵, the town associated with Han Wudi 漢武帝’s (r. 141–87 BCE) mausoleum. The youth, named Li Heng 李亨, loved hunting pheasants and rabbits with his famous hawks and hounds.¹⁷

Later textual passages that associate falconry with a misspent youth may hint at additional reasons why the sport, at least for traditionalists, did not become a mark of nobility as it did later in medieval Europe. Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) wrote the biography of Wang Sengda 王僧達 (423–458), a Liu Song official and writer who was a libertine in his youth and continued to be a wild card and hunting enthusiast later in life. According to Shen Yue, while serving as the personal secretary to the crown prince, Wang feigned illness to watch a duck fight. He also enjoyed hawks and hounds, carousing with wild youths, and butchering cows.¹⁸ Although the majority of Wang's amusements are fairly standard and can be attributed to a misspent youth, the addition of the final odd amusement—butchering cows—may reference a passage from the *Mengzi* 孟子 (fourth century BCE): “The attitude of the gentleman towards animals is this: once having seen them alive, he cannot bear to see them die, and once having heard their cry, he cannot bear to eat their flesh. This is why the gentleman keeps distance from the kitchen.”¹⁹ Other passages in the *Mengzi* also stress that the ruler should keep his moral distance from killing, which naturally could be extended to hunting as well as butchering.

Whether Shen Yue was intentionally citing the *Mengzi* here is difficult to say, but this passage highlights traditional attitudes toward the killing of animals. Prior to the introduction of Buddhism, no philosophy placed universal or moral taboos against the hunting, slaughtering, or eating of animals. Although writers did call for moderation in these activities, and as we saw in the *Mengzi* a certain physical and ritual distance, this always was in relation to the moral cultivation of humans, not out of compassion for the animals themselves.²⁰ This is clear in the passages about falconry cited here, in which the interest is not in the well-being of the animals themselves, but instead lies in the moral character (or lack thereof) of falconers.

Wild youths were often the least egregious of offending falconry aficionados and some like Yuan Shu 袁術 (d. 199), an Eastern Han official who enjoyed hunting with hawks and hounds in his youth, were redeemable. Yuan eventually went on to be recommended for his upright and filial behavior.²¹ More often, however, the enjoyment of falconry was equated with deeper character flaws and a disregard for proper social norms.²² For example, in the *Wei shu*, the Northern Wei Emperor Xiaowen 北魏孝文帝 (r. 471–499) learns that after the death of Yuan Xiu 元休, the Grand Defender in Chief (Da sima 大司馬 and King of Anding 安定王) Yuan Song 元嵩 went hunting, failing to observe proper mourning rites. Xiu then exclaims:

Song was not able to restrain himself and return to the rites and seek the laws and statutes. Not long after the death (of the Grand Defender in Chief), he used goshawks and sparrowhawks to amuse himself. To have the pain of a father, but not the emotions of a son, to discard your conscience and give up the rites so quickly! Discharge him from his office.²³

Here falconry is not simply one among a list of activities enjoyed by wild youths, but is symptomatic of the ritually inappropriate behavior of Yuan Song that causes him to lose his position.²⁴

An even more egregious disregard of the rites connected with a falconry aficionado are the actions of Xiao Zhaoye 蕭昭業 (473–494), who briefly served as the Southern Qi Emperor (r. 493–494) and was posthumously known as the King of Yulin 鬱林王. Not only was Xiao Zhaoye fond of falconry, collecting many famous hawks and hounds and feeding them with delicate meats and fine grains, but he also played riotous music after feigning illness so as not to attend the funeral of his grandfather Emperor Wu (南齊武帝, r. 483–493), and took his father's favorite concubine as consort, among other morally questionable activities.²⁵ Eventually, after continued court intrigues, Xiao Zhaoye was assassinated by Xiao Luan 蕭鸞 (452–498), who at the time was the prime minister and would later become Emperor Ming 南齊明帝 (r. 494–498). In the case of Yuan Song and Xiao Zhaoye, the antifalconry rhetoric appears at its most extreme, with falconry enthusiasts portrayed as morally vacuous individuals who completely disregard the proper rites and etiquette, the bedrock of civil society, ultimately falling from their imperial and official positions.²⁶

The danger that falconry posed to the political and social order and not just the morality of the individual, is also stressed in other sources. In the *Wei shu*, Gao Huan 高歡 (496–547), the power behind the throne of the Eastern Wei court (534–550), recommends freeing the hawks and hounds from the imperial mews and reordering the imperial harem, while at the same time requesting reports of virtuous and immoral officials, the dismissal of those who are lax in their duties, and the imprisonment of those who have committed crimes.²⁷ Although Gao Huan's suggestion to release the imperial hawks may also be connected to the Buddhist practice of *fangsheng* 放生 (releasing animals; see below), Gao Huan also drew on a long tradition connecting excessive hunting with political and social collapse. For example, in memorial to Han Wudi in the 130s BCE, Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 criticized the emperor's enjoyment of the hunt and the expansion of Shanglin Park, highlighting the important loss of agricultural land and natural resources to the throne and noting that such projects ended with the collapse of dynasties.²⁸ Gao Huan further drives home this connection by associating hunting with hawks and hounds with another common source of dynastic downfall—the imperial harem.

Continuing within this tradition, later texts make explicit the connection between falconry and dynastic collapse. Lü Sidao 慮思道 (535–586), a sixth-century poet and official in the government of several successive Northern Dynasties in the “Rise and Fall of the Northern Qi (Bei Qi xing wang lun 北齊興亡論),” writes:

Those who go against the way and disobey principles are quickly destroyed; affairs are not in order, and there is too much to tell (i.e., too

many bad things to be listed). . . . Flying hawks and sporting hounds, licentious their hearts are troubled. Beauty with a lewd voice brings chaos to their eyes and ears. Speaking of those who have merit and virtue, they say no one can exceed Fuxi and Huangdi. Speaking of those who are respectful and wise, they say no one can exceed Emperors Yao and Shu.²⁹

The key undercurrent in this and many other antifalconry passages is excess. Hunting was understood as being appropriate and necessary under certain circumstances, but most early and medieval writers treat it as fairly suspect. Falconry, on the other hand, with its specialists who train and care for hawks and falcons that require particular living conditions and who then kill animals that could be killed more efficiently by other methods, was quickly deemed to be within the realm of the superfluous and came to be characterized as an excessive hunting activity par excellence.³⁰ For the authors surveyed here, falconry was an unnecessary and excessive activity symptomatic of individual depravity and social decline and expended energy and resources that should be directed elsewhere.

BUDDHISM

The spread of Buddhism during the Six Dynasties (220–589) brought a different perspective to the traditional moral scorn in which falconry was held. Hunting in general is frowned upon in Buddhist texts because it is considered cruel and involves the death of another sentient being. Buddhist texts also contain specific references against using animals to kill other animals, including raptors. For example, a passage in the *Shi song lü* 十誦律 (*Ten Divisions of Monastic Rules*), which was translated from Sanskrit to Chinese in the early fifth century, makes the fate of falconers explicit: “The vinaya proscribes Buddhist monks from becoming ox butchers, sheep butchers, chicken farmers, pig farmers, austringers, fishermen, hunters, rabbit-trappers, thieves, assassins, snake-charmers, or prison-wardens.”³¹ The oldest surviving Chinese catalog of Buddhist texts, *Chu san cang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (*Collected Records of the Tripitaka*), compiled by Sengyou 僧祐 from 510–518, also specifically mentions a no longer extant text comprising one volume, *Ying yao lie jing* 鷹鵠獵經 (*The Falconry Sutra*), which appears to have been a whole treatise related to the evils of using birds of prey in the hunt.³²

The earliest extant Six Dynasties text that mixes traditional attitudes to falconry with Buddhist beliefs is a *fu* written by the Northern Wei scholar Gao Yun 高允 (390–487). This is not surprising as Gao, after a short career as a Buddhist monk, was an influential scholar and official at the Northern Wei court for over fifty years. In the tradition of the *Western Capital Rhapsody*, Gao wrote the no longer extant “Dai fu fu 代都賦 (Rhapsody on the Capital of

Dai),” a polemic against imperial excess, which likely would have included a description of an imperial hunt.³³ His surviving “Lu yuan fu 鹿園賦 (Rhapsody on Deer Park),” written in celebration of the deer park at Sarnath where the Buddha preached his first sermon, however, does mention the much maligned practice of falconry: “Tranquil, have benevolence and knowledge in your bosom and regard the landscape in order to use your eyesight to the utmost. Enjoy the magnificent forests in order to wander and think, terminating hunting with hawks and hounds. Take care of the aged in order to broaden your virtue.”³⁴

Antifalconry rhetoric also takes on a Buddhist flavor in the *Wei shu*, which contains the most references to the sport of all Six Dynasties histories, suggesting that falconry was widely enjoyed by the Northern Wei elite.³⁵ It also records the only outright prohibition against the raising of raptors and the establishment of a system for the report of violations under the reign of Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471–499). Although the exact context of this proscription is not given, slightly later in the same year the killing of horses and cows was also banned, suggesting underlying Buddhist ideology.³⁶ A few years earlier the Retired Emperor Xianwen 獻文 (r. 465–471) had also issued a related prohibition after hunting ducks with hawks.³⁷

The clearest connection between the banning of falconry during the Northern Wei and Buddhism is found in an edict promulgated in 480:

Emperor Gaozu (Xiaowen) said: “I lack virtue and capability. I ascended the throne when I was young and relied upon the benevolence and kindness of the Empress Dowager, who maintained peace throughout the realm; I am unable to repay her kindness. Release the kinds of birds of prey who harm living creatures to the hills and forests. Take the land occupied by the imperial mews and build a pagoda.” Thereafter the falconry master Cao who was in charge of the mews was relieved of his position and the land was used to build Baode Monastery.³⁸

Although the power struggle between Emperor Xiaowen and the Empress Dowager lies behind this edict, it is interesting for our purposes because first of all it indicates that the imperial mews had remained open after the earlier prohibition against raising raptors. In addition, the phrase, “the kinds of birds of prey that harm living creatures 諸鷙鳥傷生之類” is not commonly used in other texts, showing that in terms of the rhetorical language used, the sport was being maligned from a primarily Buddhist perspective, rather than the traditional moral scorn seen in the other texts noted previously. The idea of releasing the birds into the mountains and hills also seems to have been conceived as an act of *fangsheng* or releasing of animals as a way to accrue merit, which had risen in popularity in northern China during the fifth and sixth centuries.³⁹

CONCLUSION

By the fourth century, falconry joined a set list of elite vices from which authors could draw to express their dissatisfaction with individuals and political and social developments. In the early medieval texts surveyed here, falconry is portrayed as a morally vacuous, socially degrading pastime and an interest in the sport was seen as an indication of serious character flaws held by immoral rulers, officials fallen from grace, wild youths, and other dissolute offenders. Buddhist viewpoints differed from traditional moralizing texts, but were still concerned with the negative moral and religious effects of the sport, which was considered especially harmful because raptors were used to kill other animals. These criticisms, however, fell on deaf ears and the sport seems to have thrived during the early medieval period spreading to large segments of the population. By the beginning of the seventh century, when falconry masters were summoned to Luoyang by the Sui emperor, nearly ten thousand accomplished falconers came to the Eastern capital. While falconry would continue to have its critics, these summons and the founding of the Tang dynasty several years later mark the beginnings of a golden age in the history of Chinese falconry.⁴⁰

NOTES

1. See Wallace, "The Early History of Falconry in China and the Question of Its Origins."

2. Edward Schafer also mentions a Han dynasty text on falconry, "Ying jing 鷹經" (Goshawk Canon), mentioned in the *San guo zhi* 三國志 (*Records of Three Kingdoms*) and listed in the official Tang bibliography, which is no longer extant. Schafer, "Falconry in T'ang Times," 317. For texts of uncertain reliability that mention the practice of falconry in earlier periods see Schafer, "Falconry in T'ang Times," 294–296, and Wallace, "Representations of Falconry in Eastern Han China," 100.

3. *Hou Han shu*, 10, part 1, "Huanghou ji shang 皇后記上" and 54, "Yang Zhen liezhuan 楊震列傳." Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 422 and 1778.

4. Zhang Heng, "Xijing fu," 100. For translation see Knechtges, trans., *Wen Xuan*, 220–221.

5. On the construction and symbolism of Shanglin Park outside of Chang'an, see Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Chinese Art and Architecture*, 166–176. On the encyclopedic character of Sima Xiangru's rhapsodies on the imperial hunt, which establish descriptions of the hunt in the fu tradition, see Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 317–325. On the nature of these hunts as ritualized violence and pageants of all-encompassing imperial power see Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, 151–157. For hunting parks in early and medieval China see Schafer, "Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China," 318–343, and Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*, 111–116.

6. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, 34–51.

7. Schafer, "Hunting Parks," 337–342.

8. Schafer mentions a passage from the *Yi lei zhuan* 異類傳, a text of uncertain date, which is preserved in the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (*Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, 977

to 983) and the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (*Classes of Literary Pursuits*) by Ouyang Xu 歐陽詢 (557–641), in which a black goshawk from the Western Regions was given to Han Wudi 漢武帝. Schafer, “Falconry,” 296.

9. *Shi ji*, 117 “Sima Xiangru liezhuan 司馬相如列傳.” Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 2041. For translation, see Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian*, 282.

10. For an overview of scholarship and connections between hunting, ritual, and warfare, see Wallace, “Chasing the Beyond,” 83–88.

11. As Roel Sterckx notes, competitive physical exercise did not emerge as a sign of a gentleman-scholar in early China, with the exception of exercises like equestrianism, charioteering, and archery, which were connected with martial valor and military exercises. Sterckx, “Animals, Gaming, and Entertainment in Traditional China,” 31.

12. Additional textual references to the practice of falconry during the Six Dynasties appear in anomaly accounts recorded in the *Youming lu* 幽明錄 (*Records of the Hidden and Visible Worlds*) by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444) and the *Kongshi zhiguai* 孔氏志怪 (*Accounts of Anomalies by a Member of the Kong Clan*; mid-fourth to early fifth century), which provide two versions of a story of a fabulous hawk presented to Chu Wen Wang 楚文王 (r. 689–677 BCE) at his hunting park in Yunmeng 雲夢. Grounded in anomaly accounts’ interest in the documentation of fabulous birds and beasts, this story also references several elements of what Robert Ford Campney has called the tradition of “cosmographic collecting,” which forms the basis as well as the justification for some medieval anomaly accounts. See Campney, *Strange Writing*, 101–159. Although on the surface this tale seems to be distanced from the moralizing texts outlined here and supports the idea of the royal hunt and the collection of exotica by the king, its selection of the figure of Chu Wen Wang as royal protagonist places it firmly within the polemical tradition outlined earlier. Chu Wen Wang was known in his youth for his excessive hunting and relations with many women, until he was reined in by a wise minister. This is not necessarily surprising and as Campney points out, the *tianrenshuo* 天人說 (teaching of Heaven and Humanity) perspective of texts like the *Youming lu* were firmly grounded in Han period values. Campney, *Strange Writing*, 343.

13. *Hou Han shu* 34, “Liang Ji liezhuan 梁統列傳.” Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 1178. Physiognomic characteristics of individuals add another layer of meaning to connections between nefarious individuals and the sport of falconry. Examples are numerous, but Liang Ji is described in the same passage in the *Hou Han shu* as having, “raptor-like shoulders and the eyes of a wolf 鸞肩豺目.” Many other infamous figures are described in texts as having the characteristics of raptors. The indications of having the characteristics of a predator to the nature and/or intentions of an individual remain a potent metaphor today, but even more so in early and medieval China where people took physiognomy very seriously.

14. *Baopuzi wai pian*, 22, “Xing pin 行品.” Ge Hong, *Baopuzi*, 571.

15. Cutter, *The Brush and the Spur*, 21–22; Vuylsteke, “The Political Philosophy of Tung Chung-shi,” 98–105. The attribution of chapters 58 and 59 has been challenged by scholars; see Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, 101–104. For general issues relating to the authenticity and transmission of the text see Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu*, 191–262. See Roel Sterckx for other passages in which animal games and related gambling are criticized (*Animal and the Daemon*, 282n102).

16. Ban Gu, *Dongguan Han ji*, zhuan 5, “Geng Gong.” A biography of Geng Gong is also found in *Hou Han shu* 19, but the individual who accuses him of shirking his official duties differs in each account. In the *Dongguan Han ji*, he is accused by the Cheshi 車師 crown prince. In the *Hou Han shu* he is accused by Li Tan 李譚. Other details of the account differ in the two sources as well. Wu Shuping, *Dongguan Han ji jiaozhu*, 1:357, 360–361n20.

17. Ge Hong, *Xijing zaji*, 202.
18. *Song shu*, 75, “Wang Sengda, Yan Jun 王僧達, 顏竣,” Shen, *Song shu*, 1951.
19. Mengzi, “Liang Hui Wang shang 梁惠王上.” Lanzhou daxue zhongwen xi Mengzi yizhu xiaozu, *Mengzi yi zhu*, 15. For translation, see Cutter, *Brush and the Spur*, 138.
20. Cutter, *Brush and Spur*, 138; Sterckx, *Animal and the Daemon*, 145–151, and Sterckx, “Pre-Buddhist Attitudes toward the Hunt in China,” 19.
21. *Hou Han shu*, 75, “Liu Yan Yuan Shu Lu Bu liezhuan 劉焉袁術呂布列傳.” Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 2438.
22. As Anne Behnke Kinney has noted, references to gambling, cockfighting, and horse racing as youthful overindulgences in early Chinese biographies are usually indirect judgments of a person’s lifelong moral deficiency. Kinney, “The Theme of the Precocious Child in Early Chinese Literature,” 23–24.
23. *Wei shu*, 19, part 2, “Jingmu shier wang zhong 景穆十二王中. Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 486.
24. Wei Shou was clearly not fond of the hunt and in 534 composed the “Nan shou fu 南狩賦” (Fu on the Southern Hunt) to criticize the winter hunt held by the Northern Wei Emperor Xiaowu 北魏孝武帝 (r. 532–534). Knechtges, “Wei Shou,” 1294.
25. *Wei Shu*, 98, “Daoyi xiaodaocheng, Daoyi xiaoyan 島夷蕭道成, 島夷蕭衍.” Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 2166. Another infamous Six Dynasties emperor and falconry enthusiast was the Liu Song Emperor Houfei 劉宋後廢帝 (r. 473–477), who was known to kill humans as well as animals. *Song shu*, 9, “Hou Feidi 後廢帝.” Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 187.
26. Zang Zhi 臧質 (400–454), a Liu Song general who eventually rebelled against Emperor Xiaowu (劉宋孝武帝, r. 454–464), could also be added to the list of falconry aficionados whose actions went against the social and political order. *Song shu*, 74: Zang Zhi, Lu shuang, Chen You zhi 臧質, 魯爽, 沈攸之. Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 1910.
27. *Wei shu*, 12, “Xiaojing ji 孝靜紀.” Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 305.
28. Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 65: “The Biography of Dongfang Shuo 董仲舒傳.” Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 2849–2851. For a translation, see Watson, *Courtier and Commoner*, 85–87.
29. Zhu Shangshu and Lu Sidao, *Lu Sidao ji jiao zhu*, 162–163.
30. Such opinions relate to attitudes toward leisure activities and pleasure in early and medieval China. As Michael Nylan has shown, Chinese classical writers were not against pleasure per se, but were obsessed with transforming resource-consuming pleasures into activities that supported rather than degraded the individual, family, or state. Nylan, “On the Politics of Pleasure,” 73–124.
31. *Dazheng xinxiu da zangjing*, 22.1435.10b.
32. *Chu san cang ji ji*, 4, “新集續撰失譯雜經錄第一.” Seng You, Su Jinren, and Xiao Jiansi, *Chu san cang ji ji*, 155. This may also suggest that falconry was popular enough in India and/or Central Asia prior to the sixth century to warrant its own text.
33. Wu Jie and Knechtges, “Gao Yun 高允 (390–487), zi Bogong 伯恭,” 267–268.
34. Gao Yun and Wang Hao, *Gao Linggong ji*, 16.
35. Another falconry enthusiast who was a member of the Northern Wei royal family and whose short biography seems to fit the general negative portrayal of falconry enthusiasts outlined earlier is Yuan Xin 元訢 (late fifth/early sixth century), who was the older brother of Emperor Jiemin 北魏節閔帝 (r. 531–532). The *Wei shu* does not include many details about his life, but remarks that he was by nature vulgar and hasty and loved hawks and hounds. Wei Shou, *Wei Shu*, 21, part 1, “Xianwen liu wang shang 獻文六王上.” Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 551.

36. *Wei shu*, 7, part 1, “Gaozu ji shang 高祖紀上.” Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 141.
37. When the Retired Emperor was hunting, a duck was killed during the hunt, its mate cried out and would not leave, mourning the deceased. Xianwen was curious and asked his companions if they thought it was the male or female. After someone suggested it was the female, because females were naturally gentle, the emperor was amazed with the perceived similarity between the animal kingdom and the human world. Afterward he prohibited the hunting and raising of mandarin ducks. *Wei Shu*, 114, “Shi shi lao 十釋老.” Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 3038–3039.
38. *Wei shu*, 13, “Huanghou liezhuan 皇后列傳.” Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, 328.
39. For an overview of the early history of fangsheng in China, see Pu Chengzhong, *Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism*.
40. Schafer, “Falconry,” 297.

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ALCOHOLISM AND SONG LITERATI

EDWIN VAN BIBBER-ORR

Bad behavior tends to be seen through the eyes of others, politicized, and tidily recorded as rhetorical transgression. Yet bad behavior can also be seen within the self as self-conflict, self-doubt, and self-destruction. Self-destructive behavior is apparent in addiction; embattled in self-conflict, the addict desires to stop but cannot, destroying both the body and the mind. Never before has addiction been studied in the Song dynasty (960–1279). Through an analysis of encyclopedias, medical texts, journal writings, and poetry, this chapter for the first time parses evidence of alcoholism among Song literati.

Crystallized in the alterity of an ancient Chinese past, alcohol use has often in the field of sinology become synonymous with romanticized literati affect: Tao Qian's 陶潛 (365–427) much-adored and oft-translated “Twenty Poems on Drinking” (*Yin jiu er shi shou* 飲酒二十首), Li Bai's 李白 (701–762) “Drinking Alone under the Moon,” or Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 (1007–1072) self-bestowed epithet of “Old Drunkard” (*Zui weng* 醉翁). This romanticization, however, has precipitated a blind spot regarding the self-destructive effects of alcoholism in Chinese cultural history.

This chapter begins by providing historical context for Song alcoholism, explicating briefly the proliferation of alcohol and the banquet culture that burgeoned within it. The first section continues with an analysis of Song anecdotes of inebriety at banquets and private residences, followed by examples of social pressure to drink at banquets. The chapter's second section engages several poems by Mei Yaochen (1002–1060) and Yang Wanli (1127–1206), uncovering narratives of discrete psychological and physical symptoms of alcoholism.

To define alcoholism, this chapter employs the diagnostic criteria of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)*. The term “alcoholism” is used for the sake of familiarity; the current terminology, per the *DSM-5*, is “Alcohol Use Disorder.” There are eleven diagnostic criteria for Alcohol Use Disorder; two or more must be present for a diagnosis.

This chapter evinces the presence of five of these criteria in select Song literati, as evidenced in anecdotes and autobiographical poetry:

1. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful effort to cut down or control alcohol use.
2. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol, or recover from its effects.
3. Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol.
4. Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use alcohol.
5. Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home.¹

ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOLISM (*SHI JIU*) IN THE SONG

There was nothing improper about drinking alcohol in the Song dynasty. Indeed, the government banked on alcohol consumption.² The Song was the only imperial regime to maintain a monopoly on alcohol trade throughout a dynastic reign, outlawing the private fermentation and production of alcohol and employing an elaborate bureaucratic apparatus to monitor and maintain alcohol storehouses (*jiuku* 酒庫).³ To entice patrons, the Song regime assigned government-courtesans to these storehouses, as recounted in Zhou Mi 周密's (1232–1298) *Wulin jiu shi* 武林舊事 (*Past Happenings in Hangzhou*):

All of the above official warehouses fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Revenue Supervision Bureau. In each warehouse were placed several tens of government courtesans, and each warehouse had one thousand gold and silver drinking vessels to be used for supplying the guests with drink.⁴

Apart from these storehouses, a second primary site of alcohol consumption was the private banquet. Household-courtesans were a ubiquitous presence.⁵ Bought and sold on the open market, the expectations of these courtesans were very high, and should transgressions occur at the banquet, courtesans would often take the blame.⁶ Household courtesans were responsible for getting the guests to drink (*quan jiu* 勸酒), and the more the guests drank, the more successful the banquet. Yet, if the guests became too drunk and transgressed, the courtesan would suffer punishment.

Examining Wei Tai's 魏泰 (fl. late eleventh century) Southern Song *biji* 筆記 text *Dong xuan bilu* 東軒必錄 (*Records from the Eastern Eaves*), we find examples of the consequences of bad behavior at banquet. Beverly Bossler cites a late eleventh-century example of a banquet held by the Northern Song official Yang

Hui 陽繪 (1027–1088), in which one of the guests, an examination candidate named Hu Shiwen 胡師文 (fl. 1090–1114), becomes “half-drunk” (*ban zui* 半醉) and begins harassing (*xia wu* 狎侮) Yang’s household courtesan.⁷ Yang’s wife observes this from behind a curtain, after which she screams at the entertainer to come behind the curtains, where she whips her. This upsets Hu Shiwen, and a brawl breaks out between Yang and Hu, from which Yang barely escapes with his life.⁸

Wei ends the passage with the following didacticism: “Gentlemanly discourse particularly despises high officials who do not conduct themselves with dignity, to the point that they are bullied by petty people.” Bossler argues that Wei’s didacticism refers to Hu Shiwen’s harassment of the private entertainer: “By the Northern Song one important element in such behavior was knowing how to interact with one’s host’s household courtesans.”⁹ The trouble with behavior at these Song private banquets, however, is that they were designed to inebriate the guests, and the allure of the performers engendered lubricity: the guests were supposed to get drunk, and this inebriety could lead to molestation of the host’s household courtesans. Yet this molestation was considered to be little more than a faux transgression; the courtesan would be punished and the banquet would go on. Ultimately, it is the fact of an established official (Yang Hui) fraternizing with a much younger, uncouth examination candidate (Hu Shiwen) that Wei Tai disparages; Wei remarks earlier that Yang Hui was known to “fraternize with petty people” (*yu xiaoren jie* 與小人接).¹⁰

Another entry from *Records from the Eastern Eaves* describes a guest harassing the host’s household courtesan. In this entry, however, the courtesan’s punishment is accepted, restoring equilibrium. Wei Tai recounts a banquet held by Wang Zhao 王韶 (1030–1081), a prominent Northern Song general:

One day, at a banquet for guests, Wang Zhao sent out his household courtesan to play a tune. By the time of the nightfall feast, one of Wang Zhao’s guests, Zhang Ji 張績 (d. unknown), became deeply intoxicated (*chen zui* 沉醉) and pulled one of Wang Zhao’s private entertainers toward him to embrace her. The household courtesan began crying and complaining to Zhao, and the guests’ faces turned pale. Zhao said slowly: “I brought you out for the entertainment of my guests, and you made my guests unhappy.” Zhao ordered a large cup to punish the household courtesan. Soon after, the expression on Zhao’s face was unchanged and he was relaxed as before, and the guests praised his magnanimity.¹¹

In this second entry, Wei Tai takes no issue with Zhang Ji’s inebriated harassment of Wang Zhao’s household courtesan. Disregarding her effusion, Wang Zhao blames his courtesan for disrupting the banquet. Zhao then makes further mockery of the courtesan by forcing her to imbibe a large cup of liquor, reinforcing the banquet’s Bacchanal atmosphere. By forcing his household courtesan to

swallow and suppress her emotion, Wang Zhao inverts her agency, punishing her with the very intoxicant that precipitated her distress. Wei Tai makes example of Wang Zhao's restraint and magnanimity; by disciplining his household courtesan appropriately, Wang demonstrates banquet propriety.

The private banquet engendered alcoholic excess. Yet while intoxication was rampant, we cannot say that inebriated banquet guests were necessarily alcoholics. If we move away from the social setting of the banquet, however, we find stark evidence of alcoholism in two remarkable anecdotes found in the Southern Song medical text *Yi shuo* 醫說 (*Medical Anecdotes*, 1192). These men “loved alcohol” (*shi jiu* 嗜酒) and were plagued by demonic infestation:

There was a scholar from Zhenyang 鎮陽 who loved alcohol. During the day he would have many ladlefuls of liquor, and would drink until the middle of the night. When the desire came, he couldn't stop. His family property was broken and dilapidated. One night, he was heavily intoxicated, and vomited up something that looked like a tongue. At first glance, it was undamaged, and when he desired to drink, his eyes looked upon it and it stood up straight. His servant soaked it, using liquor to stand it up straight, and when it had the amount that it had every day it stopped. The servant then threw it into a wild fire with violent flames, splitting it into dozens of pieces. From then on the scholar thought alcohol was evil.¹²

When the scholar Cao Xijin 曹席進 (d. unknown) from Qizhou 齊州 was a child, his especially talented relative Zhang Bin 張彬 (d. unknown) was called to be his tutor. Bin loved to drink, and every night he had to put several liters of alcohol at the corner of his bed. One night, he forgot where he had put them, and woke with a great thirst. He searched but could not find them and became flustered, crying out anxiously. In a moment, he vomited something up onto the ground. In the morning he woke and examined it, and saw a piece of flesh under his bed that was yellow and looked like a liver, its top like a bee's nest, seemingly quivering. He soaked it in alcohol, and it made a *ji ji* 唧唧 sound. He then realized this was the cause of his whole life's alcohol sickness and quickly threw it into the fire, never drinking again.¹³

In both passages from *Medical Anecdotes*, the term *shi jiu* 嗜酒 defines a person whose love of drinking is marked by craving: in the first example, the craving is *xing* 興 (desire), and in the second, *ke* 渴 (thirst). The entry on the scholar from Zhenyang reads as if it was a clinician's diagnosis from the DSM-5: first, the entry presents the case as an individual who “loved alcohol,” which, of course, is analogous to “alcoholic.” The following three symptoms match uncannily with the DSM-5: “During the day he would have many ladlefuls of liquor, and would drink until the middle of the night” (“A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol, or recover from its effects”),

“When the interest would come, he couldn’t stop” (“Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use alcohol”), and “His family property was broken and dilapidated” (“Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home”).

In both cases, cravings are manifested as demonic infestation, which often represented an “evil disease” (*li* 癘) in Song (and earlier) medical discourse.¹⁴ As TJ Hinrichs notes, one of four ways demons acted on the body in Song medical texts was by “infestation (*zhu*) [by demons], which can take form as worms and gnaw the viscera.”¹⁵ Expelling demons was a common form of medical treatment in the Song.¹⁶ Expectoration via vomitus in both cases expels the demon, whose host witnesses the demon for the first time. The witnessing of the exposed demon, in both cases very much alive, compels the individual to see the evil in their drinking habit.¹⁷ The revelation is patent in the second example: “He then realized this was the cause of his whole life’s alcohol sickness and quickly threw it into the fire, never drinking again.” *Medical Anecdotes* outlines an etiology of alcoholism in the Song: the “love [of] drinking” *shi jiu* 嗜酒 was marked by a craving caused by demonic infestation. These cravings governed the behavior of the two men: the scholar from Zhenyang could not maintain his family property because he drank all day, while the severity of the tutor Bin’s cravings forced him to sleep next to alcohol. Only after the demons were expelled, pacified with alcohol and incinerated, did these men see the evil of their behaviors and resolve to stop drinking.

Shi jiu (“love of alcohol”; alternatively, “alcoholism”) as discursive category emerged early in the Song. Each of the three major early Song encyclopedias—the *Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*, 978), *Taiping Yulan* 太平御覽 (*Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, 984), and the *Cefu Yuanqu* 冊府元龜 (*Great Tortoise of the Imperial Library*, 1013)—features *shi jiu* as a typological category. In *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*, the *shi jiu* category includes an anecdote entitled “Alcohol Stench” (*jiu chou* 酒臭); a promising scholar had become addicted to alcohol to the point where one could smell the stench of alcohol emitted from his body from a great distance. Within ten days, the scholar died. This prompted a certain individual to write an exposition on quitting alcohol (*jie jiu* 戒酒), claiming that alcohol could drive someone mad (*ling ren hun chi* 令人昏癡).¹⁸ The *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* contains sixteen different anecdotal entries under the category *shi jiu*. One such entry recounts a late Tang official Wang Yuanzhong 王源中 (d. 838), who was addicted to alcohol. Once, when Wang was to hold court with his ministers, he was too drunk to get up. When he sobered, a fellow official told him what had happened, and while he was upset, he did not show any regret. This happened again, and in the end, because of his behavior, Wang was never given any important responsibilities. He blamed his career failures on his poor eyesight.¹⁹ The *Great Tortoise of the Imperial Library* contains the most extensive list of entries on *shi jiu*, with many similar examples of personal and professional problems resultant from alcoholism.²⁰ This categorical discourse on alcoholism

did not exist in the Tang; while the major Tang encyclopedias include references to *shi jiu*, not one of them includes *shi jiu* as a category. Comparing the diagnostic criteria for alcoholism from the DSM-5 with these Song anecdotes, we find that this discourse of *shi jiu* (“love of alcohol”) is analogous to a contemporary discourse of “alcoholism.”

SONG LITERATI AND STOPPING DRINKING (ZHI JIU)

Certain Song literati were aware of the deleterious effects of alcoholism and therefore attempted to abstain from drinking alcohol. This presented a social dilemma, however, as literati who refused drink at banquet were often met with derision. The well-known poet Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) composed a *ci* 詞 lyric addressing this situation:

To the tune “Xi jiang yue” 西江月 (“Moon over the River Xi”)

I wasn’t drinking because I had given it up and happened upon a banquet gathering. As I came beside it, I saw I was the only one sober. The guests asked for a little lyric, and so I picked up my brush and composed this for them.

To pass a life by, there is only this.
To escape the ten thousand things, nothing is better.
Eyebrows painted black like distant peaks,
Eyes clear as autumn water.
The guests laugh at me because I don’t drink.

Endless emaciated petals fallen ill.
Nowhere to divert myself from spring’s sadness.
The cup is passed, enters my hand, and I drain the draught.
I won’t mention the moonlight slanting and guests leaving.²¹

By agreeing to compose a poem for the guests, Huang joins the banquet. In the first stanza, Huang remarks on the allure of the performers, foregrounding the awkwardness felt at abstaining from the banquet custom of accepting a drink offered by a courtesan. The second stanza is grim, as Huang is overwhelmed by depression, finding himself powerless to resist the proffered cup a second time. Yet Huang knows that this is only a temporary escape, fearing the moment’s end and a return to the reality of his sadness: “I won’t mention the moonlight slanting and guests leaving.” Huang is unable to participate without facing mockery for not drinking, and, given his beleaguered willpower, ultimately relents. Social decorum thereby perpetuates his self-destructive behavior.

The far lesser known Southern Song poet Teng Cen 滕岑 (1137–1224) composed a similar poem in the *shi* 詩 form, addressing more personally his attempts to stop drinking:

Matching Tao Qian's Drinking Poem

To stop drinking I made a pact with the gods;
 It hasn't been long since I covered my cup.
 Some of my guests anxiously implore me to drink,
 Hoisting their cups to the performers singing introductions.
 Life is filled with troubles and depression;
 The greatest happiness is truly in the now.
 I want to drink, but I'm afraid of breaking my pact.
 If I don't drink, my guests will look on me with suspicion.
 My nature at its root is to crave drinking,
 To stop steadfastly would be to lie to myself.
 For my guests I get fully drunk;
 Only the gods will judge me.²²

Like Huang Tingjian, Teng Cen breaks a pact to stop drinking. The social situation differs, however, as the banquet described in Teng Cen's poem is his own. Teng Cen feels obligated to get drunk for his guests and does. Both hosts and guests, then, felt the social pressure to drink at banquet in the Song, enough that they would break a pact to stop drinking to participate.

In both poems, there exists a rationalization for relapse. In Huang's poem, his depression tacitly justifies his drinking, as there is "nowhere to divert [him]self from spring's sadness." In Teng Cen, the rationalization is more pronounced. Teng writes that "My nature at its root is to crave drinking / To stop steadfastly would be to lie to myself." Teng utilizes the familiar character *shi* 嗜 (to love; to crave; to be addicted to). Teng justifies his relapse by telling himself that his craving for drinking is inborn. Banquet decorum incited relapse in Song literati that were attempting to stop drinking. Certain Song literati were aware of their alcoholism and its deleterious effects, but still could not stop.

Colin Hawes has argued that Song literati believed in the emotionally and physically restorative qualities of poetry recitation and composition. Hawes cites a passage from Ouyang Xiu, where Ouyang writes of the cathartic benefits Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 (1002–1060) found in composition.²³ In Mei Yaochen's poetry, we find astonishing personal accounts of the symptoms of alcoholism. Mei displays a distinct awareness of the physically and psychologically deleterious effects of alcohol use, vacillating on the topic of abstinence or "stopping drinking" (*zhi jiu* 止酒).²⁴ Mei's poetry reveals psychological struggles with attempts to abstain from drinking, evincing harrowing physical symptoms of alcohol poisoning and alcohol dependence. Perhaps it was Mei's development of this

personal, cathartic style of composition that facilitated the development of a literary symptomatology of alcoholism.²⁵ Perhaps, too, this symptomatology originated in the epistolary nature of some of these poems, which were communications between members of Mei's social network, responding to conflicting opinions on Mei's medical condition. The first of Mei's poems responds to the persistent admonitions of a certain Judge Fan 樊推官 (d. unknown):

Judge Fan Implores Me to Stop Drinking

In my youth I loved to drink;
 But I didn't often go overboard.
 Today, though my teeth and hair are falling out,
 I love to drink, but I can't drink as much,
 Because every time I drink I vomit and have diarrhea.
 How could my six organs be in harmony?
 I'm hungover in the morning and I can't lift my head,
 The room spinning like a whirlpool.
 I search for happiness but get sickness;
 Where is the logic in this approach?
 I want to stop from here on out,
 But I'm afraid others will mock me.
 Fanzi can plead all he wants,
 But his tireless admonishing will have no affect.
 We know what would happen if I stopped,
 I wonder how not stopping will be?²⁶

It is unclear if Mei Yaochen's alcohol consumption exacerbates a preexisting condition, or if the "vomit" and "diarrhea" he complains of are a direct result of alcohol intoxication, or even alcohol poisoning. Nonetheless, Mei complains of a severe condition in the poem's second and third couplets. Mei writes that "every time" (*mei yin* 每飲) he drinks he has "vomit and . . . diarrhea" (the binomial compound *ouxie* 嘔洩). The character *cheng* 醒, "hungover," provides further evidence of the adverse physical effects of Mei's alcohol abuse. In Mei's case, the applicability of a contemporary symptomatology of addiction is difficult to ignore. Particularly revealing is Mei's couplet: "I search for happiness but get sickness / Where is the logic in this approach?" Not only does Mei complain of the symptoms of alcohol poisoning (vomiting, diarrhea, hangover), but he also writes of his inability to stop despite knowledge of the consequences. Mei Yaochen, too, feels the social pressures to consume alcohol ("I want to stop from here on out / But I'm afraid others will mock me"), further implicating a banquet culture that contributed to alcoholism.

Mei's poem was written in 1046, when he was forty-four.²⁷ Later in the same year, he received a second poem from a certain Wang Su 王素 (1007–ca. 1073) of

Ruzhou 汝州, admonishing him to begin drinking again.²⁸ Mei composed the following reply:

Wang Daizhi of Ruzhou Writes Me a Long Piece Imploring Me to Start Drinking Again and I Thank Him for It

Because I used to drink too much,
 I suffered from damaged constructive and defensive energies
 And I vomited up liters of blood.
 How could this not sicken my lungs?
 I am mindful of my parents getting old,
 And I am aware my wife and son are still young.
 I haven't died, but I've always been sick.
 How could I honor myself this way?
 Fanzi came to implore me to stop drinking;
 Telling me stopping would be beneficial.
 You then sent me a poem in which
 Your words of admonishment were pointed:
 You pointed to the fact that my years are waning;
 How could I maintain my health without alcohol?
 "In spring, you drink to enjoy the landscape.
 In summer, you drink to escape the heat.
 In autumn, you drink to forget your sorrow.
 In winter, you drink to warm your quilt.
 In drunken song, you are not estranged.
 In drunken speech, you are unafraid.
 While drinking, you can accomplish many things,
 Stopping drinking; what fault is there with drinking?
 If you live to ninety,
 Today you're halfway there.
 If you don't drink, you're only looking for trouble;
 Stopping won't necessarily be of benefit to you.
 To recklessly disrupt the real and unreal
 I'm afraid goes against the way of a rational man.
 Qu Yuan cried to the banks and rivers,
 Realizing the burden of being the only one awake.
 And you live in today's age,
 How could you avoid the mocking of others?"
 And so you told me to be diligent,
 That protecting myself this way was flawed.
 As soon as I read your great poem,
 I unexpectedly felt my face redden.
 From now on I'll be careful and drink less,

But not so much that my sickness flares up.
 I write this to thank you;
 Your words are filled with meaning.²⁹

As in the first poem, Mei begins by asserting the stark deleterious physical effects of his alcoholism: "Because I used to drink too much / I suffered from damaged constructive and defensive energies / And I vomited up liters of blood." Judging from "used to," we can infer that Mei at least temporarily heeded Judge Fan's advice from the previous poem. Again, the poem's tone is grave, almost morbid, as Mei professes his shame: "I haven't died, but I've always been sick / How could I honor myself this way?" Mei's self-loathing is self-evident.

Before long the poem begins interfacing with Wang Su's admonitive missive, quickly discarding Judge Fan's logic. Mei's poem reiterates Wang Su's: Wang asks "how could [Mei] maintain [his] health without drinking," establishing alcohol as an essential component to a functional life. In each season, drinking provides enjoyment or escape. In a social context, drinking (or, here, drunkenness) prevents humiliation. Without Wang Su's original, we cannot be sure if Mei paraphrases Wang or quotes him directly. Regardless, by quoting a poem within a poem, Mei reinscribes Wang's message, forming a dialogic relationship. It is as if he presents Wang's poem as evidence, as advice that he will follow but does not necessarily believe. For in the poem's opening lines, again, we have the symptoms that warranted Judge Fan's admonitions. How can we reconcile these symptoms with Mei's pact to only "hav[e] a little"? Proceeding beyond Hawes' catharsis into rationalization, Mei pledges to control the amount he imbibes; before, he "vomit[ed] up liters of blood" because he used to drink "too much," which is the "sickness" he hopes to prevent from "flar[ing] up." By controlling his drinking, Mei intends to avoid these consequences, yet he does not succeed.

A third poem of Mei's, written in 1048 two years after the pair of aforementioned verses, evinces his further physical and mental deterioration:

Imitating Tao Qian's "Stopping Drinking"

I'm often sick and so I want to stop drinking.
 If I don't stop my sickness won't stop.
 Of stopping, I have dread and am joyless.
 Though I'm sick, it's not easy to stop.
 Though I'd like to stop the affairs of life,
 Stopping affairs isn't right.
 In this poem, I'll stop before I exaggerate;
 Soon I'll stop in the countryside.
 Stopping in the countryside, with no one near,
 My pleasures would end, but the landscape would be beautiful.
 If I stop, who is there to help?

Only drinking could make stopping better.
 I use my words to say I'll stop and I don't stop;
 I don't necessarily have to stop.
 If I stop and I don't recover
 My stopping in vain will only fill me with shame.
 Stopping would be to conform to the current trend.
 Not stopping would be to die.
 I must not take the middle road with stopping drinking.
 If I stop then I will be a gentleman.³⁰

Mei fails to adhere to the promise made to Wang Su. While it is again unclear if the "sickness" (here *bing* 病, in the previous poem *ji* 疾) Mei refers to is a symptom of alcohol consumption or a comorbid illness, it had nonetheless "flare[d] up." Mei had claimed that he would "drink less" to prevent this, yet in this third poem, imitating Tao Qian's, Mei's problem with alcohol has worsened.³¹ Mei wants to stop, and knows that his drinking is exacerbating his condition, but the idea of stopping still fills him with "dread."

The fifth through tenth lines seem to allude to Mei's desire to take his own life, or at least a wish for his life to end. Mei admits that he'd "like to stop the affairs of life" (*yu zhi ren shi* 慾止人事), but propriety gives him pause. Mei's desire to "stop in the countryside" is perhaps a reference to Tao Qian. Rather than a physical reclusion from the affairs of state, however, Mei yearns for an existential reclusion, where the beauty of the landscape frames a final isolation ("my pleasures would end") in relief.

Mei is unable to imagine a life without consuming alcohol; indeed, his fondness for drinking has him posit an oxymoronic panacea: "Only drinking could make stopping better." The entire poem occurs as a contradiction: on one hand, as Hawes has argued, Mei employs catharsis ("Of stopping, I have dread and am joyless"), complaining of his maladies, yet on the other, he demonstrates a distinct unwillingness to abstain. The poem foregrounds the tension of this conflict, confronting the sickness of a person who professes etiological awareness, yet cannot use this awareness to his advantage. This tension is embodied by the lines: "I use my words to say I'll stop and I don't stop / I don't necessarily have to stop." Here the profound self-destructiveness of alcoholism is most evident, as Mei recognizes the hollowness of his promises to first Judge Fan and then Wang Su, acknowledging that his words and his writing have lost their credibility. With the integrity of his speech eroded, Mei imprisons himself within a labyrinth of the failed catharsis of addiction. Taken in this context of imprisonment, the last few lines occur as a resignation to his fate; Mei is aware of how bad his behavior is ("not stopping would be to die"), yet he is still non-committal to abstinence.

Mei Yaochen was not the only Song literatus to employ poetry to address grave health problems resultant from alcoholism. In the Southern Song, another

literatus of comparable renown to Mei Yaochen, Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127–1206), also complained of difficulties abstaining from alcohol in the poem “Stopping Drinking”:

First I'll make a promise to stop drinking,
 Hoping that this promise of protection will be resolute.
 I'll restrain and protect myself;
 Things don't always have to be this way.
 Before the words of promise have left my mouth,
 My mood is already miserable and unhappy.
 My whole life I've died for my love of drinking,
 I loved drinking so much I gave up my office.
 I long for the time when I was young,
 When alcohol and I were good friends.
 I lay drunk in the fragrant grass as
 The fallen petals became embroidered felt.
 I woke and the moon was already up,
 I drank again by the fallen petals.
 It weakened my intestines but I didn't stop drinking,
 To this day I have no explanation of this.
 I've fallen ill countless times because of drinking.
 This is me haunting myself; heaven isn't to blame.
 Morning comes and my stomach reports its pain,
 I drink medicine, but the pain doesn't improve.
 I keenly want to sever myself from my drinking vessel;
 I've already written a treatise of severance.
 Yet no matter what, I haven't stopped drinking.
 Before I say it the sadness comes forth.
 My mood has become my enemy,
 My mood miserable, how can I feel right?
 I might as well feel happy,
 So I take up my cup again.
 If I'm sick again tomorrow,
 I'll slowly prepare to take another look.³²

Like Mei Yaochen in his reply to Wang Su, Yang Wanli “promise[s]” to stop drinking, claiming that he will “restrain and protect himself,” much as Mei tells Wang Su that he will “be careful and drink less.” This “protect[ion]” is the same term that Wang Su, too, mentions to Mei (“And so you told me to be diligent / That protecting myself this way was flawed”). Yang expresses his resistance to the notion of abstinence, despite an awareness of alcohol's deleterious effects: “Before the words of promise have left my mouth / My mood is already miser-

able and unhappy.” Yang’s *bu huan* 不歡 mirrors Mei Yaochen’s *wu huan* 無歡 (“Of stopping, I have dread and am joyless”).

Yang Wanli’s etiological self-awareness perhaps surpasses Mei Yaochen’s. Yang knows that drinking “weaken[s] my intestines” yet he does not desist. He is aware of his self-destructive behavior, yet cannot explain it (“To this day I have no explanation of this”). He ingests medicine to treat his malady, to no avail. Yang’s psychological symptoms are equally dire. Yang’s use of the term *zi sui* 自崇 (“haunting myself”) implies an adversarial relationship with his own mind or self, epitomizing self-destruction. Yang expands upon this later in the poem:

Yet no matter what, I haven’t stopped drinking,
Before I say it the sadness comes forth.
My mood has become my enemy,
My mood miserable, how can I feel right?

In the latter two lines, Yang opposes “I” (*wo* 我) with “mood” (*yi* 意): *wo yu yi* 我與意 (“I”—“and”—“mood”) and *yi can wo* 意慘我 (“mood”—“miserable”—“I”). Yang delineates his self from his mood (*yi* 意), partitioning his emotional experience. He hasn’t stopped drinking, “no matter what,” because of his mood. His inability to feel “happy” without drinking is what drives him to drink again, despite, as we have seen, his intimate familiarity with the consequences. Yang in fact knows that he will be “sick tomorrow,” that his stomach will pain him in the morning, and he will take medicine without analgesic relief. Yang’s poem typifies the self-destruction and self-loathing of alcoholism among Song literati.

CONCLUSION: TAO QIAN’S “STOPPING DRINKING” (*ZHI JIU*) AND SOCIAL AWARENESS OF ALCOHOLISM

The origin of the term “stopping drinking” (*zhi jiu*) in Song poetry is Tao Qian’s Six Dynasties (220–589) poem of the same name. Tao’s poem reads:

I stopped to live between the city and the country.
Carefree, I stopped to rest.
I stopped to sit under the shade of a tall tree.
I stopped walking at my bamboo shack.
Fragrance stopped at the sunflowers in the garden.
Happiness stopped at my children.
My whole life, I never stopped drinking.
If I stopped drinking, there’d be no pleasure in feeling.
If I stopped at night, I couldn’t sleep.
If I stopped at morning, I couldn’t rise.

Day after day, I want to stop,
 But my constructive and defensive energies are out of balance if I stop.
 I only know there is no fun in stopping;
 I haven't learned the benefits.
 I've started to believe that stopping would be good.
 This morning, I'm really going to stop.
 From now on, moving on from this morning's stopping,
 I will stop at the mythical tree at the edge of the sky.
 A beautiful face will stop at my everyday appearance.
 How do I stop the ten thousand years?³³

The necessity of abstinence implies the deleterious effects of consumption; the difference between Tao Qian's poem and those of Mei Yaochen and Yang Wanli is the lack of discrete recognition of the adverse physical effects of consumption. While Yang and Mei list explicit physical symptoms—hangovers, vomiting blood, compromised digestion, nausea, diarrhea—Tao details dependence: “If I stopped at night, I couldn't sleep / If I stopped at morning, I couldn't rise.” Tao, too, writes of his “constructive and defensive energies” (*ying wei* 營衛), yet Tao presumes that if he stops, these energies will be “out of balance” (*bu li* 不理). A simple explanation for this disparity could be the degree of severity of alcohol dependence; Tao has recognized a problem (“I've started to believe that stopping would be good”), but his dependence has not progressed to the point of precipitating the physical symptoms seen in Mei and Yang's poems.

Despite these differences, Tao Qian in the Song became emblematic of the literatus struggling with alcohol abuse.³⁴ Mei Yaochen's poem emulating Tao Qian's is but one of many; a second example, of which I only quote the preface, is of Tao Qian's great champion, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), matching Tao's poem “Stopping Drinking”:³⁵

In the year 1097, I was exiled to Hainan, and you had been sent to Leizhou. On the eleventh day of the fifth month, we met at Tengzhou, and traveled together to Leizhou. On the eleventh day of the sixth month, we parted ways when I crossed the ocean. I was often sick with hemorrhoids and would groan at night, and because of this, you couldn't sleep. So you recited Tao Yuanming's poem, begging me to stop drinking. And so I am matching the rhyme scheme of the poem you recited to me, to give you as a parting gift, with the hope that this time I can really stop.³⁶

Su Shi's friend uses Tao Qian's “Stopping Drinking” as a vehicle to implore Su Shi to abstain from alcohol consumption. Su Shi, too, communicates intertextually with Tao's poem in the preface, inscribing Tao's line of “really stop[ping]” (*zhen zhi* 真止). Su Shi, as with Mei Yaochen and Yang Wanli, composes the poem

as a promise, as a contract, as a pact named in writing, refraining Tao's own line: "This morning, I'm really going to stop." In Su and Mei's cases, the poems are nodes in a network of communications concerned with the topic of abstinence. Su Shi's friend displays awareness of hemorrhoids as a symptom of excessive drinking. This preface, alongside the admonitions of Judge Fan, informs us that a discursive symptomatology of alcoholism circulated amongst Song literati; not only did Su's acquaintance prescribe treatment for his friend, but Su also readily accepted the prescription, indicating knowledge of its relevance.³⁷

Though drinking and intoxication were socially acceptable in the Song, there emerged a nascent etiological and symptomatological discourse of alcoholism. While no moral code vilified alcoholism, there did exist an inchoate awareness of its deleterious health effects. The treatment for alcoholism in the Song was clear: abstinence. This is evident in both the medical texts and poetry of the period. Abstinence had social implications, as we have seen in the poems of Huang Tingjian, Teng Cen, and Mei Yaochen. Mei is primarily concerned that others will "mock" him if he stops drinking. Thus exposed lies the dark underbelly of Song bacchanalia: away from the banquet, the literatus sits at his writing table, isolated by the psychological and physical effects of addiction to a social lubricant no longer serving its purpose.

NOTES

1. American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-5*, 490–491.
2. Tax revenue from the alcohol monopoly poured into Song imperial coffers; between the years 1041 and 1048, alcohol tax revenue comprised 38.9 percent of the total imperial tax revenue. See Li Huarui, "Jiu yu Song dai shehui," 177.
3. Ibid. For more on the Song alcohol monopoly, see Li Huarui, *Song dai jiu de shengchan he zhengque*, 105–140.
4. Zhou Mi, *Wu lin jiu shi*, 6.2b. Note that I borrow Beverly Bossler's convention of hyphenating the names of different categories of courtesans in the Song. For more on courtesan terminology, see Bossler, "Vocabularies of Pleasure," 71–99.
5. Beverly Bossler has written at length on "household-courtesans" in a variety of recent publications. See the aforementioned "Vocabularies of Pleasure"; *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity*; and finally "Men, Women, and Gossip in Song China," in Chen and Schaberg, *Idle Talk*, 154–177.
6. For more on the market in Song courtesans, see Bossler's excellent "Shifting Identities," 5–37.
7. Wei Tai, *Dong xuan bi lu*, 78.
8. See Bossler, *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity*, 80–81.
9. Ibid.
10. Wei Tai, *Records from the Eastern Eaves*, 78.
11. Ibid., 82–83. Beverly Bossler quoted and translated this same anecdote; see Bossler, *Idle Talk*, 169. I am indebted to Bossler's translation and interpretation.
12. Zhang Gao, *Yi shuo*, 7.11b.

13. Ibid., 5.46a.
14. Goldschmidt, "Epidemics and Medicine during the Northern Song Dynasty," 63.
15. Hinrichs, "The Medical Transforming of Governance and Southern Customs in Song Dynasty China," 146.
16. Ibid., 144.
17. Note that worms (*chong* 蟲) were often demonic. The quivering liver is infested with worms; the *Medical Anecdotes* passage itself is titled "Alcohol Worms" (*jiu chong* 酒蟲). See Hinrichs, "The Medical Transforming of Governance," 150.
18. Li Fang et al., *Taiping Guangji*, 233:9b–10a.
19. Ibid., 846:8b.
20. See Wang Qinruo and Yang Yi, *Cefu Yuangui*, 914:1a–15b.
21. Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian ci ji*, 105.
22. Teng Cen, in *Quan Song Shi*, 47: 29605.
23. Hawes, *The Social Circulation of Poetry in the Mid-Northern Song*, 84.
24. Recall the two symptoms from the *DSM-5*: (1) There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control alcohol use, and (2) Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol.
25. Jonathan Chaves writes of these personal, quotidian compositions as "describ[ing] events or scenes of ordinary life without attempting in any way to glorify them or make them 'poetic.'" See Chaves, *Mei Yao-Ch'en and the Development of Early Sung Poetry*, 134. Chaves translates two poems of Mei Yaochen's commenting on his worsening eyesight, entitled "My Eyes Go Dim" and "On My Eye Illness," written in a similar vein as Mei's poems on drinking (p. 142).
26. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 333.
27. See *ibid.*
28. Zhu Dongrun claims in a footnote that this Wang Daizhi 王待制 is Wang Su (1007–ca. 1073). There is an earlier poem of Mei Yaochen's addressed to the same individual: "Parting with the Ruzhou Official Wang Daizhi." See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 339.
29. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 338–339. Jonathan Chaves translates and briefly discusses these two poems (he paraphrases the latter); see Chaves, *Mei Yao-Ch'en and the Development of Early Sung Poetry*, 139–140. Chaves recognizes that "few Chinese poets before him [Mei], if any, had written about vomiting blood after drinking wine." Chaves's analysis ends there, however. I am indebted here, as in several of these translations, to the observations of members of the Cornell Classical Chinese Colloquium, especially Professor TJ Hinrichs. The translations are all my own.
30. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 498.
31. Tao Qian's poem "Stopping Drinking" (*Zhi jiu* 止酒) is frequently imitated and, as we later see in the case of Su Shi, matched in the Song dynasty. Wendy Swartz makes the distinction between imitation poems and matching poems in *Reading Tao Yuanming*, 200: "A matching poem uses the same rhymes as the original. Finer distinctions can be made: using the same rhyme category, the same rhyme words, or the same rhyme words in the same order. . . . In contrast, an imitation poem does not take a specific poem as its intertext; rather, it often refers to characteristics of a number of works or even an author's entire corpus." Interestingly, Mei Yaochen's poem imitating Tao's does in fact take "Stopping Drinking" as its "intertext," mimicking Tao's metronomic toll of *zhi* in each line.

32. Yang Wanli, *Cheng zhai ji*, 36.13b–14a.
33. Tao Qian, *Tao Yuanming ji*, 100–101.
34. See Fan Ziye, *Chun can yu zhi jiu*, 235–242. Fan notes Song literati's struggle with alcohol abstinence and their identification with Tao Qian, but does not address the severity of the physical and psychological symptoms found in the poems.
35. For more on Su Shi's engagement with Tao Qian, see Ashmore, *The Transport of Reading*, 26–31, and Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming*, 87–90 and 200–205.
36. Su Shi, *Su Shi quan ji*, 510.
37. TJ Hinrichs has commented on the advent of "scholar-physicians" *ruyi* 儒醫 in the Song and the increased interaction between literati and physicians. See Hinrichs, "Yi ru yi yi de Zhang Gao," 66–67 and 76.

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FLOUTING, FLASHING, AND FAVORITISM

*An Insouciant Buddhist Monk Bares
His Midriff before the Confucian Court;
Or Smile, You've been Tanfu'ed!*

N. HARRY ROTHSCHILD

In 695, in the Zhou 周 (690–705) court of female emperor Wu Zhao¹ 武曌 (624–705), the notorious Buddhist abbot Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義 (d. 695), improbably risen from male favorite of humble origins to become an influential ideologue, a veteran general, and a visionary architect of grand imperial ritual constructions, lay supine on a bench displaying his torso and midriff (*tanfu* 袒腹) to an irate censor before the tribunal in the very heart of Luoyang's Imperial City. The eccentric monk's wanton disregard for the solemnity of the venue outraged the Confucian establishment. Months later, under dubious circumstances, he was murdered.

To better couch Xue Huaiyi's bared midriff in the complex political and ideological context of the times, this chapter will attempt to discern four different aspects of meaning underlying the unorthodox monk's irreverent gesture: Buddhist, Confucian, class/popular, and etymological.

GESTURES

Gestures are nonverbal culturally legible bodily movements or postures that transmit, deliberately or inadvertently, a message to the observer.² Keith Thomas, in the *Cultural History of Gestures*, contends that these bodily attitudes are socially and culturally constructed, "an indispensable element in the social interaction of the past."³ Collectively, these facial expressions and bodily movements serve to "amplify, modify, confirm, or subvert verbal utterance."⁴ The significance of gesture cannot be overstated. As early as the eighteenth century, Condillac, in his studies on the origins of language, claimed that gestures were the

original, natural language of man.⁵ Adam Kendon agrees, arguing that “gesturing, like speech, is influenced by cultural values and historical tradition.”⁶ In recent decades, scholars have made great strides in researching the role and cultural construction of different forms of nonverbal communication, expanding understanding of kinesics, proxemics, and other embodied semiotic practices.

Overall, however, there is a paucity of studies on gesture in premodern humanities. E. Dale Saunders’s *Mudrā: A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture* surveys and examines the Buddhist meaning of ritual and iconographic hand postures.⁷ Anthropologist Eric Hoenes del Pinal has written on the contested body language among the Mayan descendant Q’eqchi in Guatemala, a discourse that contrasts the hunched, staid quietude of the mainstream Catholics with the ecstatic, effusive, gesticulations of the charismatic Catholics.⁸ Historians, enslaved as we are to the written word, have scarcely dared to sally into the nonverbal, unwritten territory of gesture. One of the few historians who has attempted to apply gesture to his work, J. A. Burrow devotes a chapter in his study of nonverbal interaction in medieval literature to gestures and nonverbal signs in Middle English poems like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*.⁹

Of course, contextualizing and fixing definition to a gesture is problematic. Kendon acknowledges that the individual “gesture phrase” is much less fixed than a comparable spoken phrase.¹⁰ It is hard enough to affix clear meaning to a written text or an utterance; for a gesture, it can be even more complicated. When seeking to understand the semiotics of a gesture, one needs to account for the plurality of social and cultural contexts in which the gesture is made, attempting to apprehend both the attitude and posture of the gesturer and the disposition of the audience toward whom the gesture was directed.

For many gestures there is no semantic consensus. The *cornudo*, a sign of cuckoldry, is virtually identical to Texas Longhorn fans’ “Hook ’em, Horns,” and closely resembles one of the Buddhist mudras, a surfer’s “hang loose,” Hawaiian-inspired shaka, and the Satanic 666, which signifies the number of the beast. In other words, a Buddhist monk, an eighth-century laborer in Luoyang, and a Confucian court minister might very well understand Xue Huaiyi’s bared midriff in different ways.

In an attempt to better apprehend Xue Huaiyi’s gesture, it is essential to look at the individual who assumed this posture and the specific social, political, and ideological context in which he *tan’fued*.

XUE HUIYI’S BIOGRAPHY IN THE OLD TANG HISTORY

Risen from obscure beginnings as a medicine-seller¹¹ in the Luoyang marketplace, Xue Huaiyi, originally known as Feng Xiaobao 馮小寶, was introduced into the inner palaces of Tang noblewomen through a sort of sexual networking

not uncommon in seventh-century China.¹² First, a maid-in-waiting passed word of Huaiyi's sexual prowess to the Qianjin Princess 千金公主, the elderly daughter of Tang founder Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618–626), who in turn relayed these tidings to recently widowed Wu Zhao. Immediately thereafter, the female ruler brought him into her service. Far more talented and versatile than the typical male favorite, Huaiyi proved a mercurial talent, rising to become an accomplished general, a visionary architect, and abbot of the celebrated White Horse Monastery (Baimasi 白馬寺), a Buddhist ideologue engaged in crafting some of Wu Zhao's most pivotal and significant propaganda.

If Confucian court officials despised male favorites, disparagingly branding them shameless parasites and sycophants, Huaiyi, for his part, treated these ministers with even greater derision. In 685, when a censor criticized Huaiyi and urged his dismissal, Huaiyi and his underlings accosted the fellow on the street and almost beat him to death. With the help of Huaiyi and other more orthodox Buddhist monks, Wu Zhao rose to become emperor in 690, claiming to be a Buddhist universal wheel-turning monarch and a living bodhisattva.

After returning from a military campaign in 693, Huaiyi increasingly kept to White Horse Monastery and tonsured a large number of rugged commoners, ordaining them as Buddhist novices. Suspecting him of fomenting rebellion, a vice censor named Zhou Ju 周矩 wrote a memorial demanding that he be impeached. Wu Zhao sent the official away, telling him that she would attend to Huaiyi. As Zhou Ju departed, however, he and Huaiyi crossed paths in front of the Tribunal (Yushitai 御史臺). Huaiyi rode his horse up the stairs, dismounted, lay on a couch, and bared his chest and midriff, flashing the censor. Zhou Ju summoned underlings to seize Huaiyi, but by the time they arrived Huaiyi had ridden away. Incensed, Zhou Ju approached the female emperor with a second complaint, but she merely said: "this man of religion is eccentric (feng 瘋) and sick (bing 病). You may not investigate him." She conceded that the censors could look into Huaiyi's strong-armed underlings. The censors investigated, decided the monks were up to no good, and exiled them to distant hinterlands. After being transferred to another position, Zhou Ju was slandered by Huaiyi, dismissed from office, and imprisoned.

Because of the favor he enjoyed, the Confucian *Old Tang History* records, Huaiyi went on behaving with such reckless, high-handed arrogance that even Wu Zhao, tiring of his antics, grew to detest him. As a result, she eventually ordered his death.

REVISITING THE ACT

It is necessary to scrutinize Xue Huaiyi's gesture more closely. The *Old Tang History* and the *Comprehensive Mirror for the Advancement of Governance* both contain similar accounts: "When (Zhou) Ju reached the Censorate, Master Xue also arrived. He rode his horse up the steps and dismounted. Reclining on a

bed or couch, he bared his chest and midriff.”¹³ Antonino Forte remarks that, based on correspondence with Chen Jinhua, he had rendered the term *tanfu* 坦腹 as “lay on a couch.”¹⁴

Wu Zhao’s biography in the *New Tang History* provides a different perspective. In this source, after Zhou Ju requested that she investigate Huaiyi’s plot in White Horse Monastery, Wu Zhao informed him that she was about to handle the matter and send the lot of them to jail. Thereafter, “Zhou Ju adjourned to the Censorate building where he sat for a short while. An enraged Huaiyi rode up, dismounted from his horse, stormed in, and promptly lay down on a large couch (da ta 大榻),”¹⁵ presumably in Zhou Ju’s chambers. While the furniture is expressly noted, nothing is mentioned about Huaiyi’s gesture.

Naturally, one is curious as to why Huaiyi assumes this unusual posture in this particular tense circumstance. Once we approach Huaiyi’s *tanfu* from four contextual vantages—etymological, class, Confucian, and Buddhist—it becomes clear that there was far more involved in his gesture.

ETYMOLOGY

Both literal and metaphorical, *tan* 坦, containing the earth radical, indicates that something is level, smooth, or even. It also takes on the meaning of its homophone *tan* 袒[袒], bared (to the waist), or, metaphorically, to reveal, to make a clean breast, to show one’s heart, to lay bare, as in *tanbai* 坦白. *Tan* can also mean candid, as in *tanshuai* 坦率, straightforward.¹⁶ *Fu* 腹 simply means stomach. The compound *tanfu* 坦腹 does not appear in the thirteen classics. The first time these characters appear in tandem is relatively late. Literally, the compound can be understood as revealing one’s stomach or midriff.

There is a well-known anecdote about famous Eastern Jin calligrapher Wang Xizhi (王羲之, 303–361) that helps to corroborate this translation. When an emissary from the family of eminent Grand Mentor Chi 郗太傅 came to the household of Wang Dao 王導 seeking to set up a marriage to the most promising and handsome young scholar, the young men dressed up and strutted around, hoping to be chosen. Only Wang Xizhi, blithely unconcerned, lay on the couch-bed in the eastern chamber with his robes open, revealing his stomach. Learning of Wang Xizhi’s extraordinary conduct, Grand Mentor Chi naturally chose him for his daughter.¹⁷ Chi took Wang Xizhi’s nonchalance as a testament to his confidence in his literary and calligraphic skills, a quality that marked him as an excellent prospective son-in-law and husband. Indeed, thereafter Wang Xizhi’s signature *tanfu* became a metaphor for a husband (nǚxū 女婿) or a son-in-law.¹⁸

An earlier passage attributed to the Daoist sage Zhuangzi 莊子 (c. fourth century BCE) shares certain attributes with the story of Wang Xizhi that may help further illuminate certain aspects of *tanfu*-ing. In this anecdote, a ruler of a statelet summons a group of cartographers to draw maps. The men stand at attention, in formal postures, pencils at ready and ink mixed, behaving with

unerring deportment. One fellow arrives late, adopts a casual attitude of indifference, and performs none of the requisite ceremonial niceties. Upon receiving his instructions, the cartographer sheds his attire and, sitting cross-legged and stark naked (*luo* 羸), applied himself to drawing the map. With admiration, the ruler sighed, “Now there is a true master draftsman!”¹⁹ Just as the Grand Mentor Chi would find a certain sublime elegance in Wang Xizhi’s relaxed posture that marked him as an excellent son-in-law, so the lord of the state was impressed by the cartographer’s casual nudity, understanding that this draftsman—unrestricted by formal conventions and unhindered by clothing—possessed a natural aplomb and grace that his rivals lacked, marking him as an ideal candidate for the job.

There is another source from the Tang that includes the term: celebrated mid-Tang poet Du Fu’s 杜甫 poem “River Pavilion” (*Jiang Ting* 江亭).²⁰ Burton Watson renders the opening lines as “I lie on my back, river pavilion warmth / Intone poems, gaze out over the fields.”²¹ Rendering *tanfu* as “to lie on one’s back” might capture the supine aspect, but it does not provide the sense that Du Fu has bared his chest, abdomen, or lower torso.

Clearly, *tanfu* is an informal posture. Curiously, this posture helps cast both of these literary and poetic figures, Wang Xizhi and Du Fu, in a relaxed attitude conducive to their creative genius. Seemingly, this casual pose, unfettered by the rigid protocol of court, allowed full play of a liberated mind that might lead to the free-flowing elegance in “Sage of Calligraphy” (*Shusheng* 書聖), Wang Xizhi’s execution of characters, or in Du Fu’s poetic musings and peregrinations. Delightful as it might be to imagine a supine Du Fu nude, sunbathing at a riverside pavilion, watching duckweed lazily float past, nudged by a late spring zephyr, we must ask why he and Wang Xizhi are given a free pass on their *tanfu*-ing—indeed it is presented as an admirable reflection of high-minded refinement—while Xue Huaiyi’s baring of his midriff strikes people as an unconscionable affront to civility and decency.

This may be explained, to a large extent, in terms of place and circumstance. If a professor attended the Association of Asian Studies conference in a raggedy T-shirt and sweatpants, and, slumping into a front row chair at a talk, thrust a hand down his trousers aping Al Bundy’s classic pose in the TV sitcom *Married with Children*, the august assembly of scholars would deem him insufferably boorish, an embarrassing affront to the gravity and dignity of the occasion. Du Fu was not sunbathing in court; nor was Wang Xizhi lying supine and partially clothed at an official state function. The protagonist of Du Fu’s verse relaxed in a riverside pavilion, far from the dignified halls of court. Wang Xizhi was in a private, domestic circumstance. Huaiyi, however, in a blatant contravention of normative behavior, *tanfu*’ed in the corridors of power—at a governmental center of jurisprudence that demanded solemn respect.

FOLK/POPULAR TANFU-ING

In contemporary China today, one often sees laborers from the provinces during the swelter of summertime hunkered down on a curb, wearing their shirts scrolled up to bare their midsections. In this manner, the heat of their core, their torso, is exposed to the flow of air, allowing them to cool off more expediently. This hunkered sitting with scrolled shirts is a culturally learned posture.

The point is that there is element of class involved here. As Keith Thomas has pointed out bluntly, gestures reflect class.²² It does not seem improbable that in late seventh century Chang'an, peasants, laborers, or itinerant medicine peddlers—like their counterparts 1,300 years later—routinely publicly exposed their midribs to cool off. Whereas for the upper classes—for Du Fu or Wang Xizhi—exposing chest and stomach while privately reclining on a couch may have been a sublime expression of refinement, Huaiyi, originally known as Feng Xiaobao, heralded from a commoner background. It is possible that, like others in the Luoyang bazaar, in the swelter of the summer months the medicine peddler exposed his chest and stomach (or even went shirtless).

This speculation of season raises the question of precisely when the unpleasant encounter between Zhou Ju and Xue Huaiyi occurred. In Xue Huaiyi's biography in the *Old Tang History*, it is recorded that after Huaiyi's involvement in a massive military expedition against the Tujue during the second year of Protracted Longevity (Changshou—December 14, 692 to December 2, 693), he eschewed the palace for White Horse Monastery, gathering the band of rugged disciples that prompted Zhou Ju's suspicion.²³ In the *Comprehensive Mirror*, the episode is recorded in an entry from the first month of the Zhengsheng 證聖 (Verification of Sainthood) reign era (November 23 to December 21, 694) though part of the entry is a flashback and the precise timing of the encounter is blurry.²⁴ Wu Zhao's biography in the *New Tang History* gives a slightly different version of events, recording that vice censor Zhou Ju warned Wu Zhao about Huaiyi *after* the *mingtang*—the massive ritual complex that Huaiyi himself had built inside the Palatine City—had burned on December 8, 694.²⁵ Though it is impossible to pinpoint their encounter, it likely occurred shortly before or after that conflagration in December 694, roughly around the winter solstice—far from the heat of summer. Luoyang winters are bitter cold; the maverick monk was *tanfu*-ing in December!

After a decade sharing intimate space with the emperor and moving among robed ministers and elite in all their finery, Huaiyi was perfectly cognizant of prescribed behavior within the confines of the court. Given both season and circumstance, we cannot interpret Huaiyi's baring of his midriff as a simple act reflecting his background and class. This gesture was not casual recidivism, an instance of Huaiyi slipping back into his former incarnation as a hawker in the marketplace, baring his midriff to cool off and relax among the vulgar

hoi polloi. It was an intentional and inflammatory act geared to incite Zhou Ju and other court ministers.

CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING OF HUIYI'S GESTURE

In *Bodily Communication*, Michael Argyle observes, "For every situation there are approved postures. . . . A person who fails to adopt the correct posture may be the object of savage disapproval—he is regarded as slack, immoral, uncivilized, or eccentric."²⁶ From the perspective of Confucian court ministers, this sort of behavior—*tanfu*-ing before a government building—was uncouth, vulgar, utterly lacking in dignity, and entirely ill-suited to the expected modulated comportment of court. Confucian *li* 禮 governed etiquette, propriety, and social decorum. Sartorial guidelines and carefully delineated rules of demeanor underscored the deep-seated importance of observing and maintaining distinctions and hierarchy. *Tanfu*-ing before the Tribunal most certainly did not constitute an "approved posture." In Confucian works, Huaiyi was judged with harsh disapprobation.

Nor was this the first time that Huaiyi's contravention of ritual protocol had infuriated the Confucian establishment. In 686, before Wu Zhao had taken the throne, Huaiyi (according to Confucian sources), because his favor was so great that princes and ministers toadied to and flattered him, behaved with arrogance and refused to bow (*yanjian* 偃蹇) to Confucian ministers in court. *Yan* 偃 can mean "to bow," to show proper ritual deference. Feisty octogenarian chief minister Su Liangsi 蘇良嗣 (606–690) took umbrage and ordered his underlings to hold Huaiyi and strike him in the face repeatedly. When the bruised monk tattled to the grand dowager, she told him that in the future he should avoid the southern offices and directly enter and depart from the Palatine City (*gongcheng* 宮城) through the Northern Gate.²⁷ As Forte points out, "by ordering Huaiyi to enter through the northern gate of the Palatine City, Wu Zhao wanted Huaiyi to avoid meeting the Confucian ministers."²⁸ This incident is yet another example of the importance of gesture—or, in this case, failure to perform the expected ceremonial gesture. It also shows that from an early juncture in Huaiyi's ascendancy Confucian ministers saw him as arrogant and lacking in manners. He had not adopted "correct posture" and met with "savage disapproval": For failure to act with appropriate ceremony given place and circumstance, he was taught a lesson and fiercely bludgeoned.

BUDDHIST RESONANCE OF *TANFU*

Xue Huaiyi was not the first Buddhist monk to lock horns with the Confucian establishment. In the late Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty (317–420), engaging in a dispute of rhetoric with ministers and generals, Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–417) wrote

“A Monk Does Not Bow Before a King” (Shamen bujing wangzhe lun 沙門不敬王者論) and a shorter treatise titled “On the Sramana’s Dress which Leaves the Left Shoulder Bare” (Shamen tanfu lun 沙門袒服論).²⁹ Though Huiyuan’s controversial *tanfu* 袒服 from the early fifth century was different than Huaiyi’s *tanfu* 袒腹 almost three centuries later, both involved contested notions of ritual and sartorial propriety.³⁰ In both cases, Buddhist monks felt that they were not subject to Confucian ceremonial protocol.

The ongoing debate over the degree to which Buddhist monks were beholden to Confucian sartorial and ritual principles raged on in the Tang. Founding Tang emperor Gaozu held a court debate in which many officials argued that Buddhist monks were unfilial sons who failed to serve their parents and fractious subjects who did not respect the authority of the emperor, prompting the sovereign to place harsh restrictions on the Buddhist faith.³¹ But under female sovereign Wu Zhao and her Zhou dynasty, a ruler and an era known for patronage and support of the Buddhist establishment, members of the *saṃgha* gained a new confidence and swagger.³²

Tanfu does not appear in any Buddhist source prior to 695, and appears only once in the entire Taisho canon, in late imperial China.³³ A similar term “revealing the abdomen/midriff” (*lufu* 露腹), however, appears six times. In the vinaya for the *bhiksuni*, the term was used to indicate that Buddhist nuns must bathe following carefully regulated prescriptions of modesty that limited the skin they could show.³⁴

In Daoxuan’s 道宣 (596–667) biography of Chan monk Tongda 通達 in *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (Xu Gaoseng zhuan 續高僧傳), dating from Wu Zhao’s era, an itinerant Buddhist monk, Tongda 通達, after seeking teachers here and there, ended up on Mount Taibai 太白 leading a life of rigorous asceticism. Partaking of no grain and not taking shelter, he pondered the abstruse as he leaned on trees. After attaining enlightenment, he took up residence in Chang’an. As Tongda’s reputation as an ascetic and a mystic grew, chief minister Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648) invited the tatterdemalion into his own household, receiving him with the utmost respect. Yet Tongda grew eccentric and, spurning the chief minister’s generous patronage and solicitude, peeled back his Chan robes, revealing his stomach (*lufu* 露腹). Angered, Fang Xuanling memorialized the emperor, Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649), urging that the ill-mannered monk be punished.³⁵ Here, roughly a half century before Huaiyi, another Buddhist monk performed a similar gesture, and it likewise met with a negative response with a member of the Confucian establishment. Later, Tongda’s erratic behavior—including an effort to enter the inner quarters of his benefactor’s household—affronted another patron, general Xue Wanjun 薛萬均, who beat the monk within an inch of his life.³⁶ Clearly, for Buddhist monks, gestures carried very different physical and spiritual meanings. Boundaries of inner and outer, thresholds of private and public—sacrosanct in the Confucian universe—did not have the same moment in Buddhist circles.

BARING MAITREYA

Antonino Forte has shown that as abbot of famed White Horse Monastery near Luoyang, Xue Huaiyi led a radical Buddhist sect centered on the future Buddha, Maitreya (Mile 彌勒). As a Buddhist abbot in the mid-680s, he and his sect of Maitreyists beat and forcibly tonsured hundreds of Daoist monks. In the vision of this radical group, the world was on the cusp of the Buddhist apocalypse; Maitreya was a messiah who punished unbelievers and led the faithful to the Tusita heaven.³⁷

Huaiyi was instrumental in Wu Zhao's brief campaign—an effort that coincided with his *tanfu*-ing in late 694 or early 695—to define herself as Maitreya incarnate. She appended the title of Compassionate One (Cishi 慈氏), Maitreya, on November 23, 694, and discarded it less than four months later.³⁸

The avenging Maitreya, within a few centuries, took on a more cheerful incarnation as the Laughing Buddha (xiaofu 笑佛). The Laughing Buddha is routinely shown with his robes wide open, baring chest and stomach. This incarnation of Maitreya is generally associated with Chan monk Budai 布袋 from the tenth century, but may have earlier roots. Indeed, perhaps Huaiyi's Buddhist appropriation of the *tanfu* marked the conceptual origin of Maitreya (or at least his earthly incarnation) as the Laughing Buddha.

There is no indication, save perhaps Wu Zhao's subsequent protestations of her monk-lover's madness, that Huaiyi was smiling as he *tanfu*-ed. Though there is no direct evidence to prove that it is so, might not Huaiyi have—at a pivotal moment of an ongoing ideological battle—been theatrically adopting a pose of an earthly incarnation of Maitreya right in the governmental and administrative heart of Luoyang?³⁹

CONCLUSION

In the Introduction to *A Cultural History of Gesture*, Keith Thomas observes: “To interpret and account for a gesture is to unlock the whole social and cultural system of which it is a part.”⁴⁰ Though this chapter reflects an effort to interpret and account for Huaiyi's gesture, at this juncture there are only a range of conjectures and possibilities that may begin to help clarify the complex religious, social, cultural, and political moment in which the monk bared his chest and midriff.

Several aspects connected to the gesture are apparent:

1. It was intentional.
2. Performed at an ideologically volatile and highly sensitive political moment, it was provocative.
3. The gesture was directed at Zhou Ju, a court minister seeking to discredit and impeach Huaiyi.
4. The gesture was performed in an ideologically and politically contested venue.

The tribunal where the two men met was in the Palatine City, not far from the towering *mingtang* complex constructed under Huaiyi's supervision and completed late in 688. This ideological hybrid contained a Confucian ritual-administrative hall, an astronomical observatory, and a separate, far taller five-story Buddhist pagoda containing a massive lacquered Buddha. Ideological tensions (and potential resolutions) were encoded in the elaborate architecture of Wu Zhao's Luoyang.

From these details alone, it seems probable that Xue Huaiyi was intentionally and blatantly making a statement, marking with a brazen gesture his political and ideological territory. Fearing to further fracture her divided court, Wu Zhao attempted to downplay the incident, denying ideological motive and explaining it away as Huaiyi's eccentricity—his sickness and madness.

Though there is no simple causal link between Huaiyi's *tanfu* and his death, it is clear that things unraveled quickly for the eccentric Buddhist monk. Several months after Huaiyi bared his midriff before the tribunal, he was killed under dubious circumstances. According to his biography in the *Old Tang History*, his progressive "arrogance and haughtiness" alienated Wu Zhao. Reportedly, Huaiyi was held under watch by several dozen robust women under the command of the Taiping Princess 太平公主 (664–713), who, after exposing a conspiracy in which he was involved, summoned a group of men who bound and strangled him.⁴¹ In Sima Guang's *Comprehensive Mirror*, Huaiyi's unbridled arrogance prompted Wu Zhao to begin loathing him. Ill at ease with Huaiyi's evasive words after the conflagration that consumed the *mingtang* complex in late 694, she secretly gathered more than one hundred stalwart women to guard him. On the *ren-zi* day of the second month of 695 (February 22), they seized him and bound him to a tree in front of the Hall of Jasper Radiance (Yao-guangdian 瑤光殿). Then they sent Wu Zhao's nephew Wu Youning 武攸寧 to lead a group of men to beat him to death.⁴² Forte has compellingly shown that these explanations are dubious, as Wu Zhao, just months earlier, had placed Huaiyi in charge of the designing and rebuilding the destroyed *mingtang* complex. Forte contends that Huaiyi's murder was likely "a political crime" motivated by a desire "of his political enemies to crush from the outset an architectural project closely bound up with a hated ideology [Maitreyism]." Ultimately, "his physical elimination" allowed anti-Buddhist enemies to engineer a "political turnaround."⁴³ Indeed, a mere twelve days after Huaiyi's death, Wu Zhao relinquished the title Maitreya that she had assumed only months earlier.⁴⁴

The Confucian court and historians of later centuries hated Huaiyi on every imaginable level. A product of the Luoyang bazaar, he was lowborn and not versed in the classics. As a male favorite (*nan chong* 男寵), he had intimate access to the female emperor's private self that they, limited to the outer court, were denied. He was not subjected to the same bureaucratic rules and restrictions. As a Buddhist ideologue, he had played a major role in compiling and circulating the propaganda that defined her as a cakravartin and a

living bodhisattva. As an architect, flying in the face of Confucian fiscal conservatism,⁴⁵ he used massive volumes of resources to build Wu Zhao's sky-piercing ritual halls. On top of this, then, flaunting his triumph in their solemn penal and judicial center, in brazen contravention to every rule of decency and decorum, he casually flashed Zhou Ju, displaying his chest and abdomen and perhaps more.

In his study, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance*, sociologist Nachman Ben-Yehuda contends that "legitimation of power should be thought of in terms of a moral order that in turn defines the societal boundaries of different symbolic-moral universes," that the connection between politics and deviance can be discovered in "problematic behavioral acts, which take place at the seams, where boundaries of different symbolic-moral universes meet and touch."⁴⁶ One of Ben-Yehuda's classifications of "political deviance" is an act (or gesture) that "aim[s] at transforming moral universes and changing moral boundaries" in a manner that "challenge[s] the authority and legitimacy of those in power."⁴⁷ Huaiyi's gesture in 695 took place in the "seams" between Confucian and Buddhist "symbolic-moral universes." In this contest and tense negotiation of power, the former (the Confucian establishment) would triumph and write the narrative that defined the Buddhist monk's act as deviant.

The primary sources that record Huaiyi's *tanfu*—the *Old Tang History*, the *New Tang History*, and the *Comprehensive Mirror*—are all didactic Confucian histories. None of these sources consider the alternative Buddhist, folk, or class interpretations of the monk's gesture that this chapter has proposed. Rather, Huaiyi's *tanfu* is disparaged and simplified, written onto the record as an irreverent, insouciant, and inflammatory act of an unhinged, illegitimate monk. In the eyes of the Confucian court, Huaiyi's deviant behavior was worse than merely bad; it was utterly deplorable. In the facile narrative morality play of Confucian historiography, the virtuous are rewarded and the wicked are punished (conveniently, court historians were the arbiters of virtue and wickedness). With his fateful *tanfu*, haughty Huaiyi's meteoric ascendancy, his decade of eminence, reached a critical tipping point; a precarious, teetering apex from which his final descent would be most abrupt.

NOTES

1. While in most secondary scholarship she is known as Wu Zetian 武則天 or Empress Wu 武后, in this essay I use the self-styled designation Wu Zhao she assumed in 689. For her assumption of the name Zhao, see *Zizhi tongjian* (hereafter *ZZTJ*), 204.6263; and *Xin Tang shu* (hereafter *XTS*), 76.3481.

2. Thomas, "Introduction," 1.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 6.

5. Lebaron and Streeck, "Gestures, Knowledge, and the World," 119. Birdwhistell, in *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University Penn

Press, 1985), 158, estimated that words encompass “no more than 30 to 35 percent of social meaning of a conversation or interaction.”

6. Adam Kendon, “Gesture,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997): 117.

7. Saunders, *Mudrā*, 3–4.

8. del Pinal, “Towards an Ideology of Gesture,” 596–597.

9. Burrow, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative*, 5. Burrow notes several other scholars who have engaged gestures, such as Italian art historian Moshe Barasch’s work on gestures in Giotto and Philippe Ménard’s work on smiles and laughter in Old French literature. E. Jane Burns, Albrecht Classen, and others have also examined aspects of gesture in medieval European literature.

10. See Kendon, *Gesture*.

11. This occupation in the market appears in ZZTJ, 203.6436, but not in *Jiu Tang shu* (hereafter *JTS*) (see note 12).

12. *JTS*, 183.4741–43, contains Xue Huaiyi’s biography. Antonino Forte has translated this biography (see *Political Propaganda and Ideology*, 150–156). This is not an attempt to provide a full biography of Xue Huaiyi, nor should its content be understood as an objective, accurate depiction of Huaiyi’s life—naturally the maverick monk is vilified in the Confucian narrative. Rather, this brief section seeks to situate—as succinctly as possible—his *tanfu* within the framework of his complex, decade-long religious and political ascendancy.

13. *JTS*, 183.4742–43; ZZTJ, 205.6498.

14. Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology*, 155n311.

15. *XTS*, 76.3483. As a censor, Zhou Ju was bold and outspoken. Five years earlier, he even showed the audacity to confront some of Wu Zhao’s notorious “cruel underlings” like Zhou Xing and Lai Junchen (see *JTS*, 186.4843, and *XTS*, 56.1414–1415 and 209.5904). This occurred in the tenth lunar month of 690, shortly after Wu Zhao inaugurated the Zhou. At this point, Zhou Ju was Censor of the Left Tribunal (*zuotai yushi* 左台御史).

16. Schussler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, 490; Matthews, *Mathews’ Chinese-English Dictionary*, 869–870; *Gu Hanyu changyong zidian*, 372–373.

17. *Jin shu*, 80.2093. The story also appears in Liu Yiqing’s 劉義慶 (403–444) *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語. For an example of *tanfu* being used as “son-in-law,” see the cross-dressing scholar Huang Chongxia’s 黃崇嘏 poem to her prospective “father-in-law” in *Taiping guangji*, 367.2924–2925; hereafter *TPGJ*.

18. *Gudai Hanyu cidian*, 1520.

19. Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 228. I would like to thank Greige Lott for bringing this passage to my attention.

20. *Quan Tangshi*, 226.2439–2440; hereafter *QTS*.

21. Du Fu, *The Selected Poems of Du Fu*, 95. There is a ghost story from the Song collection of miscellany, *Taiping guangji* (342.2713–2714) in which a husband is *tanfu*-ing in a similar carefree, relaxed attitude atop a couch under a windowsill (*tanfu yu linxuan tashang* 坦腹於臨軒欄上), while his ghost wife applies new makeup with her spectral maid holding a mirror. Little does the husband know that his wife’s former husband is peering at them through a crevice in the wall!

22. Thomas, “Introduction,” 8.

23. *JTS*, 183.4742.

24. ZZTJ, 205.6498.

25. *XTS*, 76.3483.

26. Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 204–206.

27. *XTS*, 103.3991–3992. At this same juncture, another court minister, Wang Qiuli, memorialized that as Huaiyi frequently went in and out of the inner palace, he should be castrated. The memorial went unheeded (*ZZTJ*, 203.6441).

28. Forte, *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias*, 215.

29. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 16 and 204–211. Huiyuan was responding to general Hewu Ji 何無忌, who wrote a treatise, “Criticizing the Baring of the Shoulder” (Nan tanfu lun 難袒服論), claiming that baring the right shoulder was a contravention of historical ritual precedent, that “wearing the ecclesiastical robe and baring the right shoulder differed from the Confucian etiquette system and was considered to be disdainful and in abandonment of the common etiquette”; see Fang Li-tian, *China’s Buddhist Culture*, 38–39. For a partial translation of Huiyuan’s “A Monk Does Not Bow Down Before a King,” see DeBary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 426–28, from Sengyou’s 僧祐 sixth century Hongmingji 弘明集, chapter 5, *Taisho Tripitaka*, 52.2102.

30. Chi Chih-chang, in “Dong Jin ‘Shamen tanfu,’” argues that this debate featured different Confucian and Buddhist symbolic systems, conceptions of body, sartorial codes, and ideas of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

31. *Tang huiyao*, 47.835–836.

32. For a succinct account of Wu Zhao’s patronage and support of the Buddhist establishment, see Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao*, 191–194.

33. *Chanlin sengbao zhuan*, chap. 3.

34. Heirman, “Yijing’s Views on Bhiksunis’ Standard Robes,” 149.

35. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, chap. 25.

36. Ibid. Also see Wagner, “Buddhism, Biography and Power,” 224–225.

37. Forte, “The Maitreyist Huaiyi and Taoism,” 15–29.

38. For Wu Zhao’s assumption of the title Maitreya on November 23, 694, see *XTS*, 4.95 and *ZZTJ*, 205.6497. For her decision to abolish this addition from her grandiloquent title on March 6, 695, see *XTS*, 4.95, and *ZZTJ*, 205.6502.

39. Given its limited scope, this chapter does not extensively examine Buddhist statuary for clues as to the nature of *tanfu*. During the Tang, at sites like Dazu and the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, reclining Buddhas (Wofu 臥佛) were often depicted in a recumbent posture. These figures often revealed part of the chest, though never, like the later images of the smiling Buddha, the abdomen.

40. Thomas, “Introduction,” 11.

41. *JTS*, 183.4743. Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology*, 156.

42. *ZZTJ*, 205.6502.

43. Forte, *Mingtangs and Buddhist Utopias*, 115 and 171. It is beyond the ambit of this chapter to engage in an in-depth discussion of the volatile ideological fluctuations during the first half of Wu Zhao’s short-lived Zhou dynasty. Suffice it to say that with Huaiyi died the ambitions of a more radical, millenarian sect of Buddhists.

44. *XTS*, 4.95, and *ZZTJ*, 205.6502.

45. This “fiscal conservatism” is probably better understood as rhetoric of austerity that Tang Confucians often wielded to seize the high ground and criticize the Buddhist establishment.

46. Ben-Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance*, 3.

47. Ibid., 13.

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PART III

Cultures of Bloodshed and Mayhem

*Rhetoric and Reality in Confucian and
Buddhist Attitudes toward Martial Violence*

RUNNING AMOK IN EARLY CHINESE NARRATIVE

ERIC HENRY

Among early Chinese texts, *Zuozhuan* makes an especially indelible impression on the reader's mind due to its many instances of outrageously depraved and bizarre behavior. Who, for example, could ever banish from his or her memory the image of Chen Ling-gong 陳靈公 and his two highest ministers appearing in court wearing undergarments belonging to a women (Xia Ji 夏姬) whose sexual favors all three are enjoying—the purpose of which was to exchange ribald pleasantries with each other in a court setting?¹ How awful! How unthinkable! But at the same time how liberating! As much as anyone, Confucians yearn to do what they are sternly forbidden to do, though they do not admit this even to themselves. Other early Chinese texts, it is true, have instances of bizarre and depraved behavior in sufficient abundance; but they do not produce the same effect they do in *Zuozhuan*, where they occur against a backdrop of fiercely pure and exalted Confucian idealism. It is not degeneracy per se that is so attractive in *Zuozhuan*, but rather the *dissonance*, pervasive and extreme, between the ideal and the actual, the normative and the bizarre, that its pages illustrate.

The effect of such scenes is all the more compelling in that they are replete with ominous meaning. To frolic around in court arrayed in female underwear is, in early Chinese legend, a sure way to fall prey to destruction. The personages of *Zuozhuan*, aristocrats all, nevertheless indulge in wanton behavior, as if the threat of annihilation were its final and most irresistible allurements. To do a thing that is wrong and self-destructive—the more wrong and self-destructive the better—seems in short an assertion of free will, an expression of a drive so powerful that it exceeds the will to live.

The stories involving self-destruction (which we shall soon illustrate with the career of the Lu 魯 statesman Shusun Muzi 叔孫穆子) take place against a backdrop of more generalized violent behavior, as illustrated by the following episode in the career of a great ministerial clan chief.

JI KANGZI ARRANGES HIS HALF BROTHER'S MURDER

Ji Kangzi 季康子, the well-known patron and associate of Confucius and his disciples, succeeded his father as chief of the Jisun 季孫 clan in the autumn of 492 BCE (Ai-gong 3).² Not long after his accession, he had someone in his household kill his newborn half brother to ensure the safety of his newly assumed position. Then he allowed the obedient executant of his wishes, or some luckless substitute, to be punished (judicially killed) as the sole perpetrator of the deed. The *Zuo*zhuan passage concerning Kangzi's accession does not say all of this explicitly, but neither does it allow the reader to draw inferences other than these from the data supplied.³ The situation faced by Kangzi apparently had difficult, extraordinary, delicate features, requiring the response detailed here—swift and decisive, but at the same time discreet and seemly.

A month or more earlier, Ji Huanzi 桓子 (Jisun Si 季孫斯) had fallen mortally ill and had said to Zheng Chang 正常, an old family retainer, “Do not die. If the child of Nan Ruzi 男孺子 [Huanzi's concubine] prove a boy, then inform his lordship [Lu Ai-gong] and have him appointed to the clan chieftainship [*li zhi* 立之]. If it prove a girl, then Fei 肥 [Ji Kangzi] may be appointed.”⁴ It should be explained here that the injunction “Do not die 無死” should not make us suppose that Zheng Chang was necessarily old or in failing health. Huanzi was simply ordering his retainer not to do one of the customary things—not to “follow him in death,” committing suicide upon his demise—for there was an important mission for him to carry out.

Ji Huanzi died and his son Kangzi took his place as clan chief. One day, sometime after the burial, while Kangzi was at court with Lu Ai-gong presiding, Concubine Nan gave birth to a boy. Zheng Chang carried the infant to court and said, “My master left a charge with me, his groom, that if Lady Nan gave birth to a boy, I should inform his lordship and the court officers of it and have the infant appointed his successor. Now she has given birth to a boy, so I venture to announce it.” With this, Zheng Chang fled to the neighboring state of Wei.⁵

Ji Kangzi formally requested to step down from his position as chief of the clan of Jisun, and Lord Ai sent an officer, Gong Liu 共劉, to look at the child. By then, someone had killed the infant. Lord Ai thereupon punished someone for the deed and sent an emissary to Wei to summon Zheng Chang, but he would not return.⁶

This is one of many stories that strikingly illustrate how touchy an issue the succession to clan chieftainships had become in the politics of the central states toward the close of the Spring and Autumn era. The chiefs of such clans wielded so much power that the elevation of their successors had become as much an object of violence and intrigue as the elevation of lords and kings.

The retainer Zheng Chang, it is plain, has an impossible mission to perform and acts throughout the story as if he is terrified. His appearance in court

with the infant is nothing but an honor-saving gesture; a hurried, sloppy, pro forma observance of his master's orders. His flight to Wei is a tacit admission that the forces arrayed against him are overwhelming.

Ji Kangzi and Lord Ai, for their part, both have to pretend to take the late clan chief's dying injunction seriously, as anything less would be a blot upon their public images as reverent, modest, filial individuals. Ji Kangzi announces that he will resign his position and Lord Ai sends an officer to examine the infant, checking to see if its cries, movements, and physiognomy are properly auspicious. Their show of wrath upon discovery of the infant's murder completes their demonstration of rectitude. Zheng Chang's refusal to return to Lu arises, probably, from a fear that the calculatedly righteous "anger" of these two will extend to him as well, and he will find himself facing a death penalty for failing to protect the infant's life with his own in loyal fulfillment of the charge given him by Huanzi.

Succession disputes, with their chaos and loss of life, are among the situations that should come to mind when we try to imagine the immediate social context of Confucian maxims such as, "one who takes no care about what is distant will assuredly find worry close at hand 人無遠慮, 必有近憂."⁷ Ji Kangzi's astute handling of the challenge to his accession shows that he was politically mature from the moment he assumed the Jisun chieftainship. We must not anachronistically suppose him to be a hypocrite for appearing to take an interest in the moral advice of such figures as Confucius and Gong-fu Wenbo 公父文伯's mother ("Approach [the common people] with dignity and they will be respectful; show filial piety and parental kindness and they will be loyal; promote the worthy and teach the incapable; then they will be encouraged"; speech of Confucius to Ji Kangzi).⁸ The public exercise of virtue was as much an instrument of realpolitik as was the private exercise of violence.⁹

It should not be supposed, however, that the killing of Ji Kangzi's infant brother was in itself an excessively violent act. The reason Lord Ai had to treat the killing as a crime was that a principle of authority was involved—the killing was a violation of a deathbed decree of a head of household who was also a virtual head of state. Cases of infanticide that did not involve such a violation—cases, that is, in which parents or people endowed with parental authority killed children—do not seem to have been treated as crimes in the Spring and Autumn era. However, at the same time there was a feeling among some, including the Confucian redactors of *Zuo zhuan*, that such killings were reprehensible and inauspicious.

THE DEPLORABLE END OF AN EXEMPLARY STATESMAN: THE CAREER OF SHUSUN MUZI

Shusun Muzi exemplifies in his own person the diverse and extreme characteristics of a typical *Zuo zhuan* character. His public life is a continuous illustration

of everything that was held in high esteem, both by the aristocracy to which he belonged and by the *Zuozhuan* author himself: total mastery of ritual and etiquette, complete devotion to principle, unswerving loyalty to the state, indifference to personal safety, and a power of judgment and discrimination that results in memorable *sententiae* and in accurate predictions of future events. At the same time, his domestic life is an illustration of the dark, continuous background to the brilliance of this culture, characterized by superstition, naive credulity, the fanatical cultivation of grudges, savage violence, and the unrestrained exercise of tyrannical authority. The example of Shusun Muzi allows us to see that the peculiar mixture of barbarity and refinement, perfect rectitude, and (what we are inclined to regard as) utter moral squalor so characteristic of the portrayal of the era results not so much from the contrasting deeds of people with differing personalities as from the general coexistence within *single* personalities of traits that to moderns seem disharmonious. In short, they were in important respects not like us. Shusun Muzi, let us remember, was among the finest products of his age and class. His public actions and speeches were comparable to those of Zang Wen-zhong 臧文仲 of Lu in an earlier era and only one degree less distinguished than those of sages of his own era, such as Zichan 子產 of Zheng 鄭 and Yan Ying 晏嬰 of Qi 齊. To grasp the salient features of such a personality is to understand much about the personalities of Kong Qiu 孔丘 (Confucius) and his disciples as they appear in *Zuozhuan*.

The narrative that follows may appear to go in many different directions, for the public functions of statesmen in this period, as depicted in *Zuozhuan*, were themselves diverse in the extreme. The point to bear in mind is that each situation in Muzi's public career shows a man endowed with unusual competence and correctness of judgment, while the nonpublic situation that finally leads to his destruction shows the reverse: a man miserably prey to superstition and infatuation.

Shusun Muzi's name first appears in a brief item connected with the allied campaign against Zheng that culminated in the battle of Yanling 鄢陵 (575 BCE). Here we find him entrusted, already, with a critical diplomatic mission. The force sent by Lu, encamped in eastern Zheng, was not strong enough to advance further, so Sheng-bo 聲伯 had Muzi go to Jin to request reinforcement troops.¹⁰ The item does not explain how Muzi came to be with the forces of Lu in Zheng on that occasion; the likely explanation is that he came as part of the staff of Guo Zuo 國左, a great minister of Qi to whose clan he was then attached as a retainer of some sort.

A few years subsequent to his installation as the Shusun clan chief in Lu, we find him undertaking diplomatic missions on a quasi-routine basis. In 571 BCE he went to Song 宋 to establish relations between the newly enthroned Lord Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 and the ruler of Song,¹¹ and in 570 he was Lu's repre-

sentative at a multistate conference at which Chen 陳 abandoned its allegiance to Chu and joined the alliance of northern states.¹²

The first detailed narrative concerning Shusun Muzi belongs to the following year. It celebrates the profound knowledge of ritual propriety that he displayed in the course of a mission to Jin that he undertook in 569. Lord Dao of Jin 晉悼公 entertains him at a banquet on this occasion and, to honor his guest, has his musicians perform three odes from the *Zhou Song* or *Sacrificial Odes of Zhou* 周頌, but Muzi makes no bow in acknowledgment. The musicians then sing the first three songs from the *Da Ya* or *Greater Courtly Songs* 大雅, but he again refrains from acknowledging the performance. The musicians finally sing the first three songs from the *Xiao Ya* or *Lesser Courtly Songs* 小雅, in acknowledgment of which Muzi bows three times.

The Jin Prime Minister Han Xuanzi 韓宣子, puzzled at this, instructs the master of ceremonies to ask Muzi why he ignored the music when the honor was greatest and acknowledged it when the honor was least. Muzi's reply is elegant, assured, and compendious:

The first three pieces were those proper to an occasion when the Son of Heaven is entertaining one of the foremost of the lords; I did not presume to seem as if I heard them. The second three were those proper to an interview between two rulers; I did not presume to seem as if I heard them. But in the first of the last three, your ruler was complimenting mine; how could I dare fail to acknowledge the compliment? In the second of the group, your ruler was cheering me for the toil of my mission; how could I dare not bow repeatedly in acknowledgment of his kindness? In the third, your ruler was instructing me to prosecute my inquiries among the good. I have heard that to inquire about goodness is called questioning, to inquire about relative duties is called seeking information, to inquire about ritual propriety is called deliberation, to inquire about state affairs is called consultation, and to inquire about calamities is called devising. Thus I obtained five excellent instructions; how could I dare not bow deeply in acknowledgment?¹³

The ability to make correct responses to ode singing at banquets is one of the most important aspects of competence in the conduct of interstate affairs. An anecdote similar to this one is told of one Ning Wu 甯武 of Wei, who in 623 BCE, while being entertained at a banquet in Lu, shows his knowledge of ritual propriety by *not* acknowledging the performance of some odes, as the compliment implied by their performance would make acknowledgment presumptuous.¹⁴

Several years later we see Muzi in the court of his own state of Lu acting decisively to protect the young Lu Xiang-gong against insult. Sun Lin-fu 孫林父

of Wei came to Lu in 566 to return a visit paid to his state by the Jisun clan chief earlier in the year and to renew a treaty between Wei and Lu that had been established by his (Sun's) father in 588. When the Lu marquis mounted the steps of the dais to perform the oath of alliance, the Wei emissary went up the steps with him as if he were of equal rank. Muzi, who was acting as Xiang-gong's ritual assistant on that occasion, hurried forward and said to Sun, "At meetings of the lords, our ruler has never stood behind the ruler of Wei. But now you do not wait for our ruler to mount first—our ruler does not know in what he has transgressed. Pray tarry a bit, my good sir!" Sun Lin-fu had no explanation of his conduct and showed no sign of discomfiture. In a subsequent comment, Muzi sees this quite mild departure from proper behavior as a certain harbinger of destruction:

Master Sun will surely perish. For an officer to act like a ruler and then show no regret at his transgression is the basis of destruction. As is said in the *Songs*, "Going home to supper from the palace, / With steps composed and slow." This describes the demeanor of one who follows. But one who is both rude and composed will surely be cut off.¹⁵

This illustrates two of the virtues of an excellent statesman: the ability and determination to protect the rulers they serve from disgrace and the ability to make correct predictions of future events based on small events in the present.

Next, in 562, we see Muzi trying unsuccessfully but farsightedly to dissuade Ji Wuzi 季武子 (the son and successor of Jisun Hang-fu 季孫行父) from creating the three-clan/three-army system in Lu,¹⁶ an arrangement that reduced the Lu marquises to the position of puppet rulers and distributed real authority among the Jisun, Shusun, and Zhongsun clans, with the Jisun foremost among them. This is again an illustration of farsightedness.

An item among the entries for 557 portrays Muzi going to Jin with an urgent plea for military assistance against Qi. Qi had recently broken away from the central alliance headed by Jin (as it often did) and had been launching a series of attacks against Lu (likewise not a novel situation). Muzi describes Lu's plight to the court of Jin in urgent terms: "In the morning we cannot be confident of the evening and stand looking to the west with outstretched necks, saying, 'How long do we have still to wait?'" He has personal interviews with two great officers of Jin, Zhonghang Xianzi 中行偃子 (Xun Yan 荀偃) and Fan Xuanzi 范宣子 (Shi Gai 士匄), to whom he sings an ode apiece on the hard lot of fighting men in times of war. This evokes a respectful response from the men of Jin, who apologize for their past neglect of Lu's difficulties and promise to do better in the near future.¹⁷ One may note here that Muzi's skill in ode singing is as conducive to this favorable result as is his rhetoric.

In 551 we find Muzi expressing strong disapproval of the behavior of one Yu Shu 御叔, an officer of Lu. Yu Shu fails to extend a hospitable reception to the great Lu minister and wise man Zang Wu Zhong 臧武仲, who, while journeying to Jin, gets caught in the rain and seeks shelter in Yu Shu's town. In addition to not receiving him, Yu Shu makes sarcastic remarks about "sages"—people given to uttering memorable *sententiae*—who get caught in the rain. When Muzi hears of this, he concludes that Yu Shu is a worthless person and orders that his tax burden be doubled.¹⁸ This is a good illustration of the type of authority wielded by the chiefs of the three clans in Lu. It is also an illustration of the high value Muzi placed upon learning, as it was understood in Lu at that time.

A *Chunqiu* entry for the following year (550), states that in the eighth month Muzi led an army (presumably the Shusun army) forth from Lu to help Jin fend off a Qi attack, and that he halted with this army at [the Jin city of] Yong Yu 雍榆. If it were not for this notice, we might suppose that Muzi's official activities were all of a civil (*wen* 文) nature. This shows, however, that, just like his peers in Lu and elsewhere, he could at any time be responsible for the conduct of an armed campaign. *Zuozhuan* has nothing to add to this notice, except the observation that halting at Yong Yu was in accord with *li* 禮 (the rites), probably because it showed a disposition to await instructions from Jin rather than make unilateral tactical decisions.¹⁹

A 549 anecdote recorded both in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* shows Muzi, in the course of a mission to Jin, having a conversation with the Jin Prime Minister Fan Xuanzi 范宣子 (Shi Gai 士匄). Fan Xuanzi, who by this time is approaching the end of a distinguished career and starting to show signs of hubris, begins an interview with Muzi by boasting about his ancestors. He asks Muzi to tell him what, in his view, is meant by the expression, "imperishable fame after death" (死而不朽, literally, to die but not decay). Upon receiving no reply, he lists the names of the office-holding clans to which his ancestors belonged under the Xia, the Shang, the Zhou, and the rulers of Jin; then asks if this could be taken as an example of "imperishable fame after death." Muzi's response is crushing, definitive, and memorable:

What I have heard is that such things are called "hereditary appointment," not "imperishable fame." The person of Zang Wen Zhong, the former officer of Lu, has perished, but his words still stand in later generations. *That* is what is meant by the expression "imperishable fame."²⁰

Zang Wen Zhong 臧文仲 was a direct ancestor of the Zang Wu Zhong, whom Yu Shu had been so unwise as to treat irreverently, as recounted earlier.

Late in the same year during which the exchange between Fan Xuanzi and Muzi is said to have occurred, Muzi goes to the Zhou royal court to convey Lu's greetings to the throne and to congratulate King Ling 周靈王 on the rewalling

(by Qi) of Jiā 邾, a Zhou city. King Ling is deeply impressed by Muzi's correct deportment on this occasion and confers a great carriage on him as a mark of favor.²¹

Entries for the years 546 and 545 show Muzi making critical and prophetic remarks concerning the vulgarity and ignorance of Qing Feng 慶封, a political upstart and intriguer from Qi, who comes twice to the court of Lu, first as an emissary and then as a refugee. During the 546 visit, the Zhongsun clan chief remarks to Muzi that the carriage of the Qi emissary is uncommonly beautiful, to which Muzi retorts that when the beauty of a man's accouterments exceeds his station, it is a sure sign that the man will die an unnatural death.²² Muzi entertains Qing Feng at a banquet, but treats him disrespectfully, singing *Shi* 52, "Xiang Shu" 相鼠 (Examine the Rat)." Qing Feng, however, fails to perceive the song's application to himself.²³

The following year Qing Feng's household in Qi, administered by his son, is destroyed in a sudden coup d'état, and Qing Feng gives a fine chariot to the Jisun clan chief (Ji Wuzi) so as to obtain refuge in Qi. The chariot, so glossy that it can serve as a mirror, provokes another Lu officer, Zhan Zhuang-shu 展莊叔, to remark sourly that Qing Feng's exile is appropriate, for when carriages are glossy, the owners invariably go into decline (literally, shrivel). Muzi entertains Qing Feng at another banquet, but is offended at the way he handles objects intended for sacrificial use and therefore has a musician sing an insulting ode, not extant, on owls (*mao chi* 茅鴟), a badly behaved bird used especially to refer to unfilial sons. Qing Feng, however, fails again to perceive the song's application to himself.²⁴ Here, as in other items, Mu's skill is implicitly compared to another figure's lack of skill.

When Qi at length lodges a protest in Lu about the refuge given to Qing Feng, he flees to Wu 吳, where he is given a town, recalls his scattered family members, and grows wealthier than before. Zifu Hui-bo, a Lu court officer, remarks to Muzi apropos of these developments that Heaven apparently rewards unprincipled men. Muzi retorts, "when the good grow wealthy, it is called their reward; but when the unprincipled grow wealthy, it is called their ruin." He predicts utter destruction for Qing Feng and all his dependents.²⁵ This destruction is in fact carried out six years later, a few months before Muzi's own downfall and death, in the course of an invasion of Wu by the momentarily powerful King Ling of Chu 楚靈王.²⁶ Here again, Muzi is depicted as one whose knowledge of ritual allows him to see deeply into the future.

Slightly later in the same year we see Shusun Muzi in the group of officers that accompanies Lu Xiang-gong on his journey to Chu. The count of Zheng is absent from his capital—he too is on his way to Chu—when the party from Lu passes through his state, so Bo You 伯有, the Zheng prime minister, has a feast spread for the Lu marquis on a bank of the Yellow River. Bo You, however, offends his guests through want of respect. Muzi then utters a malediction in the

guise of prophecy, which is to be validated two years later by the overthrow and death of Bo You:

If Bo You is not punished in Zheng, Zheng will surely suffer great injury. Respect is the chief principle of the people. When it is cast aside, how can a people keep what they have received from their forebears? If the men of Zheng do not punish him they will be sure to suffer through him. "The duckweed and watercress, gathered by the banks of shallows and standing pools, are placed in the ancestral temple where the Lady Ji Lan 季蘭 is the recipient of them." This expresses respect.²⁷

Later in the journey, when the men of Lu receive word of King Kang of Chu 楚康王's death, Muzi is among those who prudently urge the marquis to continue to his destination.²⁸

A *Zuozhuan* entry for the next year, 544, contains the first direct intimation of impending trouble for Muzi. This was the year that Prince Ji Zha 季札 of Wu went on a tour of the central states, astonishing all the local courts with the breadth of his culture and the pertinence of his remarks. Upon arriving in Lu, his first recorded act is to see Muzi and warn him that he will suffer an unnatural death in consequence of failing to select the right people to serve him. "I have heard," he says, "that a man of quality [*junzi*] considers it his principal business to select worthy people—you are a hereditary minister of Lu and are responsible for a great part of its government, yet you are not careful in the men you raise to office—how can you withstand the consequences? Calamity will surely come upon you."²⁹

But Muzi still seems to be going strong. In the year 542, we find him making, on his own account, a remarkable series of accurate predictions. In conversation with various Lu officers, he foretells in quick succession (1) the impending death of Zhao Wenzhi 趙文子 (Zhao Wu 趙武), the prime minister of Jin (this is the first of four or five *Zuozhuan* predictions of that important event); (2) the decline of the prestige of the rulers of Jin, leading to the final collapse of the alliance of the central states; (3) the rise to prominence in Jin of Han Xuanzi 韓宣子; (4) the imminent demise of Meng Xiao-bo 孟孝伯 (Zhongsun Jie 仲孫羯), the current Zhongsun clan chief; (5) the imminent demise of Lord Xiang, the reigning marquis of Lu; and (6) the future incompetence on the throne of Lord Xiang's successor Prince Zhou 周, or Lord Zhao of Lu 魯昭公, who, due to conflict with the Jisun clan, was to spend most of his reign in exile.³⁰

These predictions are made in the standard or classical manner; that is, they are presented as deductions based upon signs consisting in the main of subtle details of speech, gesture, apparel, or other behavioral phenomena. They show that at this late phase of his career, Muzi has come to be regarded as a

wise man whose every word carries weight. They are also perhaps an illustration of the maxim, “When a man is close to death, his words are skillful 人之將死，其言也善.”³¹ It is a noticeable phenomenon in *Zuozhuan* that as characters approach death, their predictive abilities increase.

The last Shusun Muzi narrative of any consequence prior to the account of his death in 538 concerns a large multistate conference that took place in 541 in Guo 郭, in the state of Zheng. The object of the conference was to renew a peace treaty that had been concluded in Song in 546, according to which Jin and Chu were to cooperate with each other as cohegemons and were to be formally recognized as such by the other states. The delegate of Chu is Prime Minister Prince Wei 圍 (later the disastrously misbehaving King Ling of Chu), who comes to the conference wearing splendid clothing and escorted in front and behind by soldiers bearing ax-spears (*ge* 戈).³²

Upon observing his approach, Muzi remarks to a group of delegates with him that the prince of Chu is “richly arrayed, like a king.”³³ The remark is prophetic, because Prince Wei is soon to seize the throne of Chu after strangling his nephew King Jia Ao 郊敖 and killing two grandnephews, Jia Ao’s sons. Once on the throne, he is to embark on a remarkable though ultimately abortive career of military conquest extending throughout the next decade. In *Guoyu*, Muzi’s prophetic comment on Prince Wei’s accouterments is longer and more explicit than it is in *Zuozhuan*.³⁴

While the conference is still in session, Ji Wuzi, the Jisun clan chief, puts Muzi in an extremely perilous position by attacking the state of Ju 莒 and taking Yun 郚, a Ju town. This action constitutes a violation by Lu of one of the terms of the conference: none of the participating states is to initiate any military action while negotiations are in progress. When Ju emissaries appear at the conference and announce what has taken place, Chu, in consultation with Jin, decrees that Lu, having violated the nonaggression agreement, must submit to the punishment of having its delegate Muzi put to death. Muzi is accordingly seized by the men of Chu.

At this juncture a man named Yue Huanzi 樂桓子, the ritual assistant to the Jin delegate Zhao Wenzhi, has a messenger ask Muzi for a sash (presumably a splendid sash, suitable for ceremonies), in return for which he offers to intercede for him with Chu. Muzi declines to give it and when an associate asks him why he begrudges the sash, he says,

“Assemblies of the states are for the protection of our altars. If I use a rich gift to secure my own escape, Lu will certainly be attacked. This would be the same as bringing calamity upon the state; how could it be called protecting the state? Men have walls to shield themselves from evil. When the wall develops cracks and falls to ruin, where lies the blame? If instead of protecting the state I do injury to it, I would be more to blame even than such a wall. Though I resent what Jisun has done, what wrong

has Lu committed? That the Shusun chief should go abroad on missions while the Jisun chief remains at home is our established custom—toward whom can I feel resentment? But Yue wants his bribe; if I don't give him something, he will never leave off importuning me." With this, he called the messenger, tore a width of silk from his lower garment and gave it to him, saying, "The sash is narrow."

When Zhao Wenzhi of Jin hears of this conduct, he is overcome with admiration and vigorously intercedes with Chu on his behalf, arguing that to show lenience in this case would redound to Chu's credit and would encourage other officers to behave in the same brave, loyal, incorruptible manner as Muzi. Chu grants the request and Muzi is spared.³⁵ Later, after returning to Lu, Muzi is at first reluctant to resume relations with Ji Wuzi, the man who put him in danger by attacking Ju. But he eventually decides to put aside his personal grudge to avoid creating an impediment to the conduct of affairs in Lu.³⁶

In the *Guoyu* version of this episode, Muzi uses altogether different reasoning to explain his refusal to give a bribe to Yue Huanzi (his main point there is that it would create a bad precedent); the awesomely insulting gesture of tearing a strip of silk from his lower garment is missing; and there is no mention of Zhao Wenzhi's intercession—Muzi's speech alone makes Chu relent.³⁷ Such was the freedom with which clan and court pedagogues and reciters handled their material: the essential narrative remains the same, but everything else can vary. In both versions the episode leaves one with the impression that declining to give a bribe was in this case a more effective means of escaping death than giving one would have been. This is an illustration of the maxim, "a man's very life is honesty [literally, straightness]—without it, he will be lucky indeed to escape with his life 人之生也直，罔之，生也幸而免."³⁸

Among the *Chunqiu* entries for the year 538 is one that says, "In winter, in the twelfth month, on the day *yi-mao* 乙卯, Shusun Bao [Shusun Muzi] died."³⁹ To this, *Zuo zhuan* appends a long retrospective narrative showing that the death was not a natural one and that the household of this exemplary minister of Lu had for years been the scene of growing turmoil and chaos. The narrative in short brings us back to all the disturbing and sinister motifs—filicide, superstition, chaotic mating and family rearing, reckless authoritarianism, violent and treacherous intrigues, and so on—with which this chapter began.

At an earlier time—we can deduce from the narrative that it was much earlier, before any of his other recorded adventures—Muzi left the Shusun clan and went to Qi. The purpose of this removal probably was to put himself beyond the reach of the jealousy and suspicion of his elder brother Shusun Qiaoru 叔孫僑如, then chief of the Shusun clan (cf. the jealousy and suspicion of an elder brother in the different story cited near the beginning of this chapter, Ji Kangzi). While traveling to Qi he met a woman in a place called Kangzong 康宗. She prepared a meal for him and he passed the night with her. She asked

him where he was going and, when he told her all the circumstances, she wept and escorted him a bit of the way on his journey.

After coming to Qi, Muzi took a bride of the Guo 國 family, one of the great ministerial clans of Qi, who bore him two sons, Meng Bing 孟丙 and Zhong Ren 仲壬. One night, he dreamt that the sky fell down upon him and that he was unable to hold it up; but then, looking around, he saw a black and hump-backed man, with deep-set eyes and a pig's snout, to whom he called out, "Niu ["ox"], help me!" On this, he was able to hold the sky up. In the morning, he assembled all his followers, but none of them resembled the man in the dream. He shared the story with them, though, to make a record of it.

Later, after Muzi had been called to the chieftainship of his clan in Lu, the woman of Kangzong with whom he had spent the night came and presented him with a pheasant; and when he asked her whether she had a son, she replied, "My son is big and tall already; he was able to carry the pheasant and follow me." Muzi called for the son and saw at once that he was the person he had seen in his dream. Without asking his name, Muzi addressed him as Niu, and the boy responded, "Here I am." Muzi summoned all his followers and made them look at him, after which he made Niu his houseboy. He showed the boy much favor and, when he was grown, entrusted him with the management of the household.⁴⁰

Earlier, when Muzi returned to Lu, he had left his wife of the Guo clan and his two sons by her in Qi; and after a time a Qi acquaintance of his, Gongsun Mingzi 公孫明子, took this lady for himself. Muzi was in consequence angry with his sons Meng Bing and Zhong Ren, and did not send for them until they were adults.

One day, after hunting in Qiu You 丘猶, Muzi fell ill. The houseboy Niu had long wanted to create a disturbance in the household and take possession of it, and had tried to persuade Meng Bing to act with him, but he had refused to do so. Recently, Muzi had caused a great bell to be cast for Meng Bing (signifying his appointment as Muzi's successor) and said to him, "You have not yet mingled socially with the court officers. Invite them to an entertainment so it [the bell] may be hung" (literally, dropped; probably means "consecrated" or "inaugurated"). When the preparations had been made, Meng Bing sent Niu to his father to fix a day for the entertainment. Niu entered Muzi's quarters but purposely refrained from coming into his presence, then came out and appointed a day. When the guests came, Muzi heard the sound of the bell and Niu said to him, "Meng Bing has got your northern [i.e., Qi] wife's lover as his guest." Muzi was enraged and wanted to go at once to Meng Bing's quarters, but Niu prevented him. After the guests had left, however, Muzi had Meng Bing seized and killed outside the Shusun family compound.

Niu then tried to force the second son, Zhong Ren, to become his confederate, but he also refused. Once when Zhong Ren and Lai Shu 萊書, the marquis of Lu's charioteer, were looking about the palace, the marquis saw him and

gave him a ring. Zhong Ren sent Niu with the ring to show it to his father. Niu went into Muzi's quarters, but did not show it; and when he came out, he told Zhong Ren, as if conveying his father's instructions, to wear it at his girdle. Niu then said to Muzi, "Why did you introduce Zhong at court?" "What do you mean?" asked Muzi. Niu replied, "If you didn't introduce him, then he has introduced himself. His lordship gave him a ring, and he wears it at his girdle." Upon this, Muzi had Zhong Ren driven from the clan, and he fled to Qi.

When Muzi's illness became severe, he ordered Niu to recall Zhong Ren from Qi. Niu promised, but did not do it. When Du Xie 杜洩 came and saw the ailing chief, Muzi told him he was suffering from hunger and thirst, and gave him an ax-spear with which to kill Niu, but Du Xie said, "If you require anything, it will be brought to you; why must you make away with him?"

Niu then said to everyone, "The master is very ill and doesn't wish to see anyone." He had the attendants place Muzi's food in a side chamber and retire, while he himself, instead of taking it in, emptied the dishes, replaced them, and ordered them to be removed. From the day *gui chou* 癸丑 of the twelfth month to the day *yi mao* 乙卯 when he died [a period of three days], Muzi had nothing to eat.⁴¹

Niu elevated Zhaozi 昭子, Muzi's son by a concubine, to the chieftainship and acted as his assistant. Later, not long after Muzi's funeral, Zhong Ren returned from Qi and tried to lay claim to the chieftainship, but Niu, through the assistance of a confederate named Nan Yi 南遺, was able to get Zhong Ren killed. He was mortally wounded in a clash in front of the state arsenal, after which Niu conferred thirty towns upon Nan Yi in recognition of his services. Soon afterward, however, when his protégé Zhaozi, the concubine's son, was formally confirmed as chief of the Shusun, Niu suffered a setback. Zhaozi gave audience to all the members of the clan at his installation ceremony and said, "The houseboy Niu has done evil to the house of Shusun and thrown into confusion the great principles of natural order. Having put to death the children by the principal consort and elevated to the chieftainship the son of a concubine, he has gone on to distribute to others the Shusun towns, that he might thereby gain forgiveness for his offenses. His crimes could not be more heinous and we must quickly put him to death."

Niu took fright at this and fled in the direction of Qi, but the sons of Meng Bing and Zhong Ren killed him by a gate at the Qi border and threw his head into a thornbush at Ning Feng 寧風.⁴² Zhaozi, it is clear from later *Zuozhuan* passages, remained in possession of the chieftainship. The narrator quotes Confucius as observing that Zhaozi, in refraining from rewarding Niu for his services, had done something virtually impossible (叔孫昭子之不勞, 不可能也). This, like many judgments attributed to Confucius in *Zuozhuan*, seems a hopelessly equivocal mixture of implied praise and implied disapproval. He goes on, however, to quote an old saying that seems more definitely to exonerate Zhaozi of wrongdoing: "An administrator does not confer rewards for

personal favors, nor does he impose punishments to satisfy personal resentment (不賞私勞, 不罰私怨).⁴³

This story, coupled with the numerous items concerning Shusun Muzi's public activities, is in fact an illustration of the ancient Chinese distinction between the public and the private, and helps us to understand, or, better, to instinctively sense, why the word for "private," *si* 私, carries the connotation "improper, illicit, shameful."

CONCLUSION

This distinction between the public and the private that we see in such extreme form in *Zuozhuan* may help to explain apparent anomalies of psychology that appear in other texts. There are many personages in early Chinese narrative who from a modern perspective appear to suffer from multiple personality disorder. A major culture hero in the pre-Qin period was Wei Wu-gong 衛武公 (r. 812–758 BCE), who helped mightily to restore the house of Zhou in the east after the fall of the western capital in 771. He is referred to in *Guoyu* and elsewhere as a sage ruler and an ancient source of morality and wisdom.⁴⁴ At the age of ninety, in order to admonish himself, he is said to have composed *Shi*, 256, "Yi" 抑, twelve eight-line stanzas of quiet, beautiful moral exhortation.⁴⁵ Yet *Shiji* 史記 records that he came to the throne through a violent, insubordinate, thoroughly impious act. He and some armed henchmen attacked his elder brother, the designated heir to the Wei throne, before the grave of his newly deceased father, causing his presumably overpowered brother to commit suicide.⁴⁶ Qi Huan-gong 齊桓公 (d. 643 BCE), the illustrious first hegemon, came to the throne of his state in an almost equally reprehensible fashion, but Confucius, for one, seems to acquiesce in his use of force, trickery, and the annihilation of rivals, because his rule brought lasting benefit to the people of the central states.⁴⁷

The *Shiji* biography of the Warring States general and statesman Wu Qi 武起 (440–381 BCE), recounts how that figure slew a large group of people in his home district for mocking him, neglected his filial obligations to his mother, and killed his wife, a woman of Qi, to enhance his chances of getting a position in Lu by removing any suspicion that he might have secret ties with Qi. This account also records a long speech Wu Qi made to the ruler of Wei 魏,⁴⁸ the main point of which is that the strength of the state lies not in its natural protective barriers, but in the exemplification of exalted ethical ideals, namely *de* 德, *ren* 仁, and *yi* 義.⁴⁹ When seeking to understand ethical terms used in a given culture, it is important not just to fix definitions, but to notice in what social domains they are operative. In the *Zuozhuan*/*Guoyu* narratives, terms such as *de*, *ren*, and *yi* often apply to large public gestures carried out before audiences. They are qualities that successful rulers exemplify once their positions are safely secured. There was a general willingness to accept the use of violence when the welfare of the body politic seemed to be at stake. Assassination was but

one of many routine expedients used by rulers and officers to attain policy ends. There was no firm distinction between legitimate and illegitimate killing. Even the often repeated proscription against regicide seems to have been little respected in practice.

Anyone, no matter how exalted in character, may upon occasion indulge in “judicial” or “righteous” killing. The wise, eloquent, resourceful, and benevolent Zichan 子產 of Zheng, whose *Zuozhuan* speeches make him seem an earlier avatar of Confucius, and who the Confucius of *Zuozhuan* and the *Analects* plainly reveres,⁵⁰ could without a qualm order a misbehaving administrator to commit suicide.⁵¹ Confucius himself is said, unreliably it is true, to have put a political enemy to death while serving as *si kou* 司寇 or banditry overseer of Lu,⁵² and, less reliably still, is credited with various other killings (e.g., some dwarfs at the Jia Gu 荅谷 conference in 500 BCE).⁵³ These ill-attested killings were at some point felt to be a necessary part of the legend of Confucius, without which his image as a competent, decisive, impartial administrator would have lacked something.

The noblemen of *Zuozhuan*/*Guoyu* ceaselessly discuss the moral stature and practical attainments of their rulers and peers, but the personal domain does not seem to count in such assessments. Private life, or perhaps we should say life in general, is portrayed as dark, chaotic, sordid, and clouded with terror and anxiety. This terror is the source of the omnipresent concern of *Zuozhuan*/*Guoyu* personages with foretelling the future; that is, with determining in advance who will die and who will survive. It lies behind the frequency with which terms denoting dread, gloom, and anxiety, such as *huan* 患, *you* 憂, and *lǜ* 慮 appear in the *Analects* and *Zuozhuan*. Spring and Autumn era people, as portrayed in *Zuozhuan*, frequently run amok. Something in them snaps. They start behaving self-destructively and are quickly disposed of by their adversaries.⁵⁴ That in the midst of such circumstances the early Chinese were able to create the concept, and at times the reality, of a spacious public domain governed by *li* was a notable achievement; but the sword worn at the girdle, iconographically preserved in public images of Confucius, was nevertheless a real bronze sword, meant for killing people.

NOTES

1. *Zuozhuan*, Xuan-gong 9 (600 BCE), item 6. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 601–602.

2. *Zuozhuan*, Ai-gong 3, item 4. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1623.

3. As always, the *Zuozhuan* author relies on the reader’s ability to put two and two together. The inference that Ji Kangzi had his infant brother put away is based on the same type of reasoning that leads Dong Hu 董狐, the Jin court annalist, to conclude that Zhao Dun 趙盾 was the instigator of Jin Ling-gong’s assassination in 607 (*Zuozhuan*, Xuan-gong 7, item 3. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 662–663). In each case the circumstantial links are so plain that the act of reading remains incomplete until the conclusion pointed to is silently drawn.

4. *Zuozhuan*, Ai-gong 3, item 4. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1623.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Ibid. In contexts like this, *tao* 討 can mean anything from “punish” to “launch a military attack.” Here it probably means “punish by killing some individual.”

7. *Analects*, 15.11. Legge, *Confucian Analects*, 298; my translation.

8. *Analects*, 2.20. Legge, *Confucian Analects*, 152; my translation.

9. Gong-fu Wenbo was the head of a cadet branch of the Jisun clan in Lu. *Guoyu* has eight narratives that portray his mother as a sage. Several of these show Ji Kangzi respectfully seeking her instruction in matters pertaining to personal or public conduct. See *Guoyu*, 5 (Luyu 2), items 10 through 17. *Guoyu*, 202–212.

10. *Zuozhuan*, Cheng-gong 16 (575 BCE), item 8. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 892.

11. *Chunqiu*, Xiang-gong 2 (571 BCE), item 8, and *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 2, item 6. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 919 and 923.

12. *Chunqiu*, Xiang-gong 3 (570 BCE), items 6 and 7, and *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 3, item 6. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 924 and 928.

13. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 4 (569 BCE), item 3. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 932–934. The same narrative occurs in *Guoyu*, 5 (Luyu 2), item 1. *Guoyu*, 85–88.

14. *Zuozhuan*, Wen-gong 4 (623 BCE), item 7. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 535–536. The similarity of the Muzi anecdote to the Ning Wu anecdote should alert us to the possibility that we are dealing here with a folklore motif rather than a historical datum; this, in other words, was the sort of story that through natural gravitation came to be attached to people known for ritual expertise.

15. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 7 (565 BCE), item 7. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 952–953; the *shi* quotation is from *Shijing* 詩經 18, “Gao Yang” 羔羊, 1st stanza, lines 3 and 4.

16. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 11 (561 BCE), item 1. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 986–987. The same narrative occurs with a more elaborate speech of dissuasion in *Guoyu* 5 (Luyu 2), item 2. *Guoyu*, 188–189.

17. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 16 (557 BCE), item 5. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1028–1029.

18. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 22 (551 BCE), item 1. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1065.

19. *Chunqiu*, Xiang-gong 23 (550 BCE), entry 9. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1072.

20. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 24 (549 BCE), item 1. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1087–1088.

21. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 24 (549 BCE), item 11. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1093. This bestowal seems possibly historical; a later entry in *Zuozhuan* is much concerned with discussion and negotiation in Lu over the disposition of this carriage, both before and after Muzi’s death. See *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 4 (538 BCE), item 8. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1259.

22. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 27 (546 BCE), item 2. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1127.

23. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 28 (545 BCE), item 9. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1149.

24. Ibid.

25. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 4 (538 BCE), item 4. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1253–1254.

26. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 4 (538 BCE), item 8. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1259.

27. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 28 (545 BCE), item 12. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1151. The saying about the duckweed and watercress is a paraphrase of *Shijing* 15, “Cai Pin” 采蘋. The idea behind it is that it is the demeanor of the offeror, not the richness of the offering that constitutes respect.

28. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 28 (545 BCE), item 12. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1152.

29. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 29 (544 BCE), item 13. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1161.

30. *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 31 (542 BCE), item 4. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1185–1186.

31. *Analects*, 8.4. *Confucian Analects*, 209; attributed to Zengzi; translation mine.

32. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 1 (541 BCE), item 1. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1202.

33. Ibid.
34. *Guoyu*, 5 (Luyu 2), item 6. *Guoyu*, 195–196.
35. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 1 (541 BCE), item 2. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1204–1207.
36. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 1 (541 BCE), item 6. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1211.
37. *Guoyu*, 5 (Luyu 2), item 7. *Guoyu*, 196–198.
38. *Analects*, 6.17. *Confucian Analects*, 190. The translation here is from *The Analects of Confucius*, translated and annotated by Arthur Waley (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938, undated Vintage Books reprint), 119.
39. *Chunqiu*, Zhao-gong 4 (538 BCE), item 6. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1245.
40. One may note that the casualness of Muzi's original transaction with the woman of Kangzong, together with his assignment of the son she later presented him with to the position of houseboy, probably justify the assumption that she was a commoner; the males in her family, in other words, had no swords, ancestries, or personalities.
41. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 4 (538 BCE), item 8. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1256–1259.
42. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 5 (537 BCE), item 1. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1261–1263.
43. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 5 (538 BCE), item 1. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1263.
44. *Guoyu*, 17 (Chuyu 1), item 7. *Guoyu*, 550–553.
45. *Mao Shi*, 18, *Mao Shi Zheng Jian*, 3a–6b.
46. *Shiji*, 37, “Wei Kang-shu Shijia.” Sima Qian, *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju; 1959), 1591. This also mentions Wei Wu-gong's service to the house of Zhou after the fall of the western capital.
47. *Lunyu*, 14.18, 5b–6a.
48. This refers to the Jin successor state of Wei, not the earlier Wei of the Spring and Autumn period.
49. Roughly, “virtue, empathy, and gallant boldness.” See *Shiji*, 65, “Sunzi Wu Qi Liezhuan.” *Shiji*, 2165 ff.
50. See, for example, *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 20 (522 BCE), item 9. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1422, where Confucius is reported to have shed tears upon hearing of Zichan's death, remarking, “He exemplified the love bequeathed us by the ancients.”
51. *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 2 (540 BCE), item 4. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1229–1230. The man ordered to kill himself was a Zheng nobleman, Gongsun Hei 公孫黑. His culminating offense was the attempted slaughter of a ministerial clan.
52. *Shuo Yuan*, 15:27. Xian Zonglu, *Shuoyuan Jiaozheng*, 380–381, and *Shiji*, 47, “Kongzi Shijia.” *Shiji*, 1917.
53. *Shiji*, 47, “Kongzi Shijia.” *Shiji*, 1915.
54. See, for example, the narrative concerning the downfall of Bo You 伯有 of Zheng in 543, *Zuozhuan*, Xiang-gong 30, item 10. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1175–1178. A later item says that in 538 the people of the Zheng capital succumbed to mass hysteria when the rumor got out that the ghost of Bo You had returned to haunt the city. See *Zuozhuan*, Zhao-gong 7 (535 BCE), item 9. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1291–1292.

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“WOLVES SHEPHERDING THE PEOPLE”

Cruelty and Violence in the Five Dynasties

HONGJIE WANG

The chaotic period of the Five Dynasties and Ten States (Wudai shiguo 五代十國, 907–979) witnessed great upheaval in a divided China. From the crumbling of the Tang 唐 empire (618–907) to the next reunification of China under the Northern Song 北宋 dynasty (960–1127), five short-lived dynasties succeeded one another in north China, while a number of autonomous regimes occupied the rest of the country, mostly in the south. Lasting more than a half century, this period is thought to have been one of darkest eras in Chinese history, replete with tales of military rulers and generals who unarguably were greedy, malicious, lecherous, self-indulgent, and bloodthirsty. With few exceptions, historians in later times dismissed the era as an “age of tumult” (*luanshi* 亂世).¹ Song historian Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) observed, “Monarchs of Five Dynasties all rose to power as military men. Surrounding themselves with doughty soldiers, they partitioned the country and proclaimed themselves kings. As rulers, they were like wolves shepherding the people.”²

It seems understandable that the chaotic Five Dynasties period is usually depicted as one of the bleakest eras in Chinese history, particularly by the Song historians who collectively condemned the preceding regimes and their rulers from a moral perspective, so as to lend more legitimacy to the Song reunification.³ One may argue that the dark portrait of the military rulers and generals of Five Dynasties might be historiographically distorted. However, it is still impossible to deny the occurrence and continuation of massive violence during this long period of turbulent division, as the military constituted one ultimate basis of power and many regimes unceasingly vied for supremacy through war.⁴ This chapter examines notorious crimes perpetrated by Five Dynasties military monarchs and their commanders based on the records of both official histories and *biji* accounts, and aims to explain the phenomenon of incessant violence and cruelty during this transitional period. Rapidly shifting political rule, contested boundaries,

an excessive emphasis on martial values, and tensions between the military (*wu* 武) and the civil (*wen* 文) all contributed to the violence and instability of the day. The unending wars and volatile politics fostered an environment wherein a widespread contempt for human life became commonplace, particularly among the military men who rose to power through combat and slaughter.

THE MILITARY RULERS “FOND OF KILLING”

Throughout the late Tang and Five Dynasties, many military men of low rank forcefully seized opportunities amid the chaos to assume lofty titles. As a military governor of the day boldly declared, “Any man with sufficient doughty soldiers and fine horses can be Son of Heaven; pedigree is hardly necessary.”⁵ Another regional ruler testified, “Today, the realm is partitioned into kingdoms and territories: the greater proclaim themselves ‘Emperor’ while the lesser assume the title of ‘King.’”⁶ Predictably, countless brutal skirmishes and devious intrigues paved the route to success for rulers in this tumultuous age. Rulers who survived in this treacherous climate rarely hesitated to use terror to seize power and control their subjects. Such men shared certain traits: they ruled with an iron fist and generally possessed an unsalable thirst for power and recognition. Even among this ruthless lot, Zhu Wen 朱溫 (852–912, r. 907–912, also known as Zhu Quanzhong 朱全忠) of Later Liang 後梁 (907–923), Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 (895–948) of Later Han 後漢 (947–950), and Wang Jian 王建 of Former Shu 前蜀 (907–925) stood out as particularly callous and cold-blooded monarchs, earning notoriety for their avowed “fondness of killing” (*hao sha* 好殺) in the historical records.

Zhu Wen emerged as one of the most competitive warlords in north China in the last two decades of the ninth century. Though born to a local teacher’s family, Zhu obviously did not receive any proper Confucian training. After losing his father in youth, he served as a petty retainer, and his hardscrabble early years shaped his tough character. He was described as “particularly savage” in the *New History of Five Dynasties*, and as a man “taking pride in his sturdiness and valor” in the *Old History of Five Dynasties*.⁷ The Huang Chao Rebellion (878–884) offered Zhu Wen an opportunity to prove his toughness in the chaos of the decadent Tang. First joining the rebel forces and then switching his allegiance to the faltering Tang sovereign, Zhu Wen quickly transformed his fortune from servant to governor of one of the most significant commands in the heartland of Tang. By the turn of the century, Zhu Wen had become the most influential warlord in north China, dominating the core area of the Central Plains in today’s Henan province. His power at court reached its zenith in the following years when he transferred the powerless Tang emperor from Chang’an eastward to Luoyang, closer to his own power base, where he soon proclaimed his own dynasty, the Later Liang.⁸

Cruelty and violence characterized the ruling style of Zhu Wen both during his military career and his imperial reign. The *New History* observes: “From

the reign of Taizu [Zhu Wen], the Liang adopted a policy of raging violence, mayhem, and murder."⁹ From his earliest days as governor, Zhu Wen severely punished military failures: one of his practices, "Decapitating the Squadron," involved the beheading of every soldier in a brigade that lost a captain in battle. To prevent desertion, he ordered that troops should have their faces tattooed with distinctive patterns.¹⁰ After he seized more territory and rose to a higher position, Zhu Wen's temperament became even more unpredictable. One contemporary report notes that "subordinates facing the master quaked with fear" and "anyone who disobeyed his orders in any slight manner was immediately slaughtered"; in the throes of this culture of fear "every time officials and underlings went to court [to meet Zhu Wen], they bid farewell to their families; if they returned alive, it occasioned a celebration."¹¹

In 903, to take total control of the Tang throne, Zhu Wen ordered the massacre of all eunuchs serving the court, several hundred in number. The following year, the chief minister and the emperor were murdered. The most sanguinary moment came in 905: in a terrifying atrocity known to history as the "Disaster of White Horse" (*Baima zhi hu* 白馬之禍), Zhu Wen butchered thirty Tang courtiers one night and dumped their mangled corpses into the Yellow River.¹² Zhu Wen consolidated local power in a similar brutal fashion: during a military campaign against the rebellious troops of Weibo 魏博 (today's Hebei) in 906, he summarily ordered the massacre of more than seven thousand rebels, including children.¹³ After ascending to the throne, Zhu Wen did not relinquish his reputation for cruelty. With perfunctory justification, he executed most of his meritorious commanders and their clans, including the man who helped him murder the last Tang emperor.¹⁴ In his final years, Zhu Wen added scandalous perversion and depravity to his already impressive repertoire of bad behavior, summoning his daughters-in-law to serve him at night and engaging in incestuous relations.¹⁵ Unsurprisingly, his conduct did not foster familial harmony. Tensions between father and sons intensified, culminating in an ugly intramural succession struggle during which Zhu Wen was assassinated by one of his sons.¹⁶ The cruel ruler met a cruel end.

Liu Zhiyuan, the founding monarch of Later Han, was also known as a merciless ruler in Five Dynasties history. A professional warrior of Shatuo Turk origin, he served under the two preceding dynasties, the Later Tang 後唐 (923–936) and the Later Jin 後晉 (936–946). Depicted as a taciturn man with a fearful face, Liu Zhiyuan from an early juncture proved both his military valor and his penchant for cruelty. In a conflict between his commander and an emperor of the Later Tang to whom he was supposed to be loyal, Liu brutally massacred the entire imperial entourage, leaving the emperor helpless and alone at a post station.¹⁷ After the Later Jin was founded, the new ruler rewarded him with governorship of several significant commands. In the chaos of 947 when Kitan armies devastated north China, Liu skillfully availed himself of the opportunity, proclaiming his own dynasty and expelling the invaders. A man "obdurate and severe in nature," he adopted draconian rules to try to secure his ephemeral

reign, which lasted but one year.¹⁸ For example, people engaged in illegal salt or wine trade faced death sentences, regardless of amount.¹⁹ In addition, he imposed a cumbersome tax that made “the people suffer greatly” so that “the whole realm was burdened due to this exploitative levy.”²⁰

The cruelty of two of Liu Zhiyuan’s favorite courtiers served to underscore his repute for ruthless and brutal governance. An infamous general, Liu Zhu 刘铢 was “inclined to savagery and fond of murder,” but still enjoyed the patronage of Liu Zhiyuan, who “believed the man owned the same courage and decisiveness as the emperor himself and thus deployed Zhu with every confidence.”²¹ When Liu Zhu investigated cases, he took a perverse delight in designing severe punishments and never hesitated to use them: the “Age-based stick” (*sui nian zhang* 随年杖) beat the accused a number of strokes according to their age; the “double happiness stick” (*he huan zhang* 合欢杖) required the accused to be pummeled by two sticks at once.²²

Su Fengji 蘇逢吉, another favored Later Han courtier, was even more brutal. Sources depict him as “greedy and shameless, fond of killing.”²³ When Liu Zhiyuan appointed him to investigate prisons prior to the issuing of an amnesty on his birthday, a political tradition to show imperial magnanimity, Su Fengji interpreted the order to “bring tranquility to the jail” (*jing yu* 靜獄) in a singularly grisly fashion. Without even a summary investigation he ordered that every prisoner be killed, then reported to the monarch, “The jail is now tranquil!”²⁴ Though Liu Zhiyuan’s response is not recorded, the ruler seemingly appreciated the brutality of Su, for he later promoted this kindred spirit to chief minister. To control the spread of banditry, Su Fengji simply enforced more severe punishments. An edict drafted by the minister himself dictated that not only bandits but their clans and neighbors should face a death penalty. Following this harsh order, one local magistrate slaughtered several hundred innocent residents in seventeen villages; another official captured a few dozen peasants, cut their hamstrings and abandoned them in the mountains where the lot of them died several days later, moaning in agony. While people deemed these to be wrongful acts, Su Fengji praised the two cruel officials for their capabilities. “Thereafter,” the *New History* reports, “banditry provided justification for wanton and excessive murder across the realm.”²⁵

Exemplified by Wang Jian, founder of the Former Shu kingdom in today’s Sichuan, the southern kingdoms also produced a succession of cruel and violent rulers. “Highly inscrutable and full of cunning,” remarks the *Old History*, “it was usually very hard to anticipate his thoughts.”²⁶ Another source renders a similar judgment, accusing the ruler of “excessive jealousy and sanguinary nature that caused many commanders of merit to die for sundry reasons.”²⁷ As early as the 880s, while vying for the supremacy in Sichuan, Wang Jian designed a bloody scheme to intimidate the Tang court-appointed governor. At Wang Jian’s behest, his soldiers cannibalized the deputy of a governor, a man accused of stealing food from an army granary, right in front of the shocked

governor.²⁸ To control his own armies, Wang Jian introduced a strict code of discipline. After conquering Chengdu, Wang Jian appointed the ironhanded Zhang Qing 張勣 to patrol the city, publicly executing lawless soldiers who plundered and looted. After that, Zhang Qing gained the sobriquet, "Chest-thumping Zhang" (Zhang daxiong 張打胸).²⁹ Severe punishment was meted out even to meritorious senior officers, including some of Wang Jian's adopted sons who violated laws or challenged his authority. In the summer of 914 when one of his most able adopted sons left his post without permission, the ruthless Wang Jian immediately ordered the guards to execute him.³⁰ In another case, Hua Hong 華洪, his best commander, aroused Wang Jian's hair-trigger suspicion. A strange rumor circulated in the capital, relating the name of a grand building Wang Jian had erected, "Red Mansion" (Honglou 紅樓), to the general's name, hinting that "painting the Red Mansion" (*hua* 畫紅樓) resembled "Hua Hong's building" (Hua Hong *lou* 華洪樓). The unfortunate homophone provoked the jealous ruler, and not surprisingly, the general was soon summoned and killed without proof of guilt.³¹

So many regional monarchs of the day shared a proclivity for brutality and harshness that this widespread phenomenon of the Five Dynasties might aptly be called a trademark of the age. Historians even criticize the most highly regarded monarch of the era, Shizong 世宗 (Chai Rong 柴榮, 921–959, r. 954–959) of Later Zhou 後周 (951–960), for "killing too much" and "enforcing laws too harshly."³² He once ordered the execution of twenty-four innocent people who had relatives involved in banditry.³³

In some instances, the rulers' brutality might be attributed to the concerns of maintaining control in a chaotic era, but in other cases it could be explained by insanity. For example, Liu Yan 劉龔 (889–942) of Southern Han 南漢 (905–971) designed many brutal instruments of torture, such as long knives and saws to scrape human flesh. Every time he observed torturing and killing, sources report, the ruler "could not contain his pleasure in watching the victims die, unconsciously grating his jaw and drooling from a gaping mouth."³⁴ His son Liu Cheng 劉晟 (r. 943–958) inherited this streak of sadism, for he expanded his father's repertoire of instruments of cruelty, creating a massive hive of hundreds of torture chambers known as "living hells" (*sheng diyu* 生地獄).³⁵ Offering a due judgment of condemnation, a later historian opined, "Their cruelty surpassed that of Jie and Zhou [notorious rulers of ancient times]."³⁶

THE "EXTREMELY CRUEL" MILITARY COMMANDERS

While military monarchs like Wang Jian needed to (at least in rhetoric and appearance) manifest generosity and leniency to conform to an image of virtuous kingship that conferred political legitimacy, many military commanders in the Five Dynasties had no such scruples. Unhindered by concerns of virtue or legitimacy, these savage martial men committed the most egregious crimes

against humanity in this era, often framing shocking violence as military valor; others developed a pathological bloodlust, taking delight in killing and torture just for sport.

Not surprisingly, a number of such harsh generals herald from the Later Han. Besides aforementioned Liu Zhu, Shi Hongzhao 史弘肇 stood out as one infamous representative. A capable general of Liu Zhiyuan, Shi Hongzhao was known for extreme harshness in commanding his army, anyone who even “slightly opposed his will” faced an immediate death sentence, which made the whole army’s “knees go weak.”³⁷ His strict discipline won the trust of the ruler and earned him a promotion to a higher position in court. During a crisis, the ironfisted Shi Hongzhao was appointed as police superintendent in the capital, where his barbarous severity turned the city to a hell on earth: for the most trivial misconduct people were summarily put to death; citizens who dared remark on unusual heavenly signs were accused of spreading rumors and publicly executed; a drunk man was arrested and decapitated for offending patrolling guards. Shockingly brutal penalties of the time included cutting out the tongue, cleaving tendons, and peeling off the mouth. Anytime his aides reported cases and asked for adjudication, Shi Hongzhao simply raised three fingers, a gesture indicating death by cleaving the body at the waist; orders were carried out immediately.³⁸ Under this atmosphere, terror gripped the city.

Other military men during the Five Dynasties rivaled his cruelty, and sometimes supplemented it with irrefutable insanity and a pathological taste for blood. Tuyu 突欲 (also known as Li Zanhua 李贊華, 899–936), a Kitan prince who defected to the Later Tang, was known for his predilection for drinking human blood, a vampirism fed by stabbing the arms of his concubines and sucking directly from them.³⁹ Ironically, this selfsame Kitan prince deeply “admired” Chinese culture, honing his skill in Chinese painting, and reportedly compiling a personal library of thousands of books.⁴⁰

Liu Xin 刘信, governor-general of the imperial army in the Later Han, matched Tuyu’s barbarity. He once punished his underlings by torturing their wives and children in a horrendous manner—carving raw meat from their arms and legs and forcing them to swallow gobbets of their own flesh. The general then ordered music and wine, enjoying the spectacle and the bloodshed without showing the slightest hint of pity.⁴¹

The raving lunacy of Tuyu and Liu Xin offers but a glimpse at the pervasive culture of cannibalism, carnage, and cruelty in the turbulent late Tang and Five Dynasties.⁴² During the late Tang, a rebel army in north China under the leadership of Qin Zongquan 秦宗全 (d. 889) reportedly ate stores of human flesh due to food shortage; on campaigns, soldiers carried salt-preserved corpses for rations.⁴³ Cannibalism also occurred in the kingdom of Min 閩 (896–945), where ruler Wang Yanzheng 王延政 (909–945) ordered that rebels he defeated and killed in a revenge campaign in 945 be processed into jerky. He distributed the dried meat from more than eight thousand men to his troops.⁴⁴ Brutal can-

nibalism often served as a tool of intimidation or punishment, as in the aforementioned cases of Wang Jian and Liu Xin. Dong Zhang 董璋, a governor of the Later Tang, took this heinous practice to a grotesque extreme. In 930, he tried to summon his old colleague Yao Hong 姚洪 to join his revolt against the court, but Yao declined the invitation, wiping his ass with Dong Zhang's letter and casting it into a cesspool in a gesture to show his resolute loyalty to the court. Soon, the furious Dong Zhang defeated and captured Yao Hong. He set up a huge cauldron over a fire, then scalded and sliced off the still-living general's flesh until Yao Hong breathed his last.⁴⁵

Cannibalism was not merely practiced for survival, revenge, or as punishment. Some bloodthirsty generals became addicted to human flesh simply for pleasure. Chang Congjian 苻从简, a famous general of the Later Tang, was known for both his heroic valor and the extreme devilries in personal life. Time and again, Chang served as the vanguard, besieging city walls under fire; once, he charged into the enemy's camp with a small number of cavalrymen and seized their banner. Stricken by an arrow that lodged so deep in his hip bone that it had to be chiseled out, Chang Congjian merely chatted and laughed as the physician performed the bloody surgery.⁴⁶ Yet this intrepid general was a demon in human guise. At whim or the slightest provocation, he whipped or killed subordinates. But the most unbearable villainy he perpetrated was cannibalizing children seized from the local population to whet his deviant appetite. Not surprisingly, the *Old History* judges him as "the single-most brutal military courtier."⁴⁷

Zhao Siwan 赵思绾, one of the most notorious generals in the Five Dynasties, matched Chang Congjian's cruelty and cannibalism. First serving as a local commander under the Later Han, his penchant for eating human livers and gallbladders was well known. Zhao relished removing livers from enemies, then stewing and eating the organs before his agonized quarry, most of whom were still alive as he completed the "meal." As Zhao wolfed down gallbladders, one after another, chasing them with wine, he boasted, "Once I consume one thousand gallbladders, I'll be invincible!"⁴⁸ In 949, the general joined an allied revolt against the court; sources report that every time he faced a food shortage, Zhao ordered the capture of local women and children; they were butchered, dressed, and distributed to feed his troops. Each time several hundred humans were "slaughtered like goats or pigs."⁴⁹ The gallbladders Zhao Siwan ate, however, did not make him invincible; that same year the general met his own death.⁵⁰

This disturbing pattern of violence and cruelty was rampant among military commanders during the Five Dynasties. Besides the names mentioned above, more could be added: cold-blooded Wang Gong 王珙, depicted by the *New History* as "extremely cruel," once "executed someone and continued to laugh and talk even as the head was tossed before him";⁵¹ An Chongjin 安重进, a captain whose "temperament was especially ferocious," randomly killed a

passerby merely to test the sharpness of his blade;⁵² Gao Li 高禮, a governor of Wu-Yue 吳越 (893–978), was reported to have captured and cannibalized pedestrians around his mansion after sunset every day.⁵³ This Gao Li even discussed with his magistrates the possibility of “killing off the people” living in his town and only gave up the crazy plan out of concern that he would lose his tax base.⁵⁴ In this bleak era of constant warfare, military commanders who rose to power by killing did not stop the bloodshed even during short-lived periods of peace.

MILITARY MEN “BULLYING AND DESPISING” THE LITERATI

The tension between the military (*wu*) and the civil (*wen*) is one of the defining characteristics of political history of the late Tang and Five Dynasties.⁵⁵ From the vantage of civil officials of the day, the predominance of *wu* over *wen* in late Tang was a leading cause for the disintegration of the empire. Song historian Ouyang Xiu, who “saw a military dimension to Tang crisis, the unbalance of *wen* and *wu*,” shared this view.⁵⁶ During the tumultuous transition from the Tang through the Five Dynasties to the Song, arrogant military men commonly had no regard for *wen*; many savagely purged the literati. Qing scholar Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727–1814) once indignantly commented, “All the governors were martial men. After seizing power, they grew capricious, bullying and despising the literati, sometimes even slaying them without cause.”⁵⁷

Zhu Wen’s callous attitude exemplified the martial men’s contemptuous mistreatment of the literati during this period. Civil officials loyal to the lost Tang court became the brutal military usurper’s first victims, as the Disaster of White Horse attests. Another famous story also illustrates Zhu Wen’s antipathy toward the literati:

Quanzhong [Zhu Wen] once sat under a big willow with his staff and guests and remarked: “This willow is suitable for making a carriage axle.” Initially, no one responded, but later several guests agreed: “It’s well suited for an axle.” An irritated Quanzhong reprimanded sternly: “You scholars all like to mimic and mock others—as you have in this case. An axle must be made of elm, and can’t be fashioned from willow.” Zhu looked to his soldiers and said: “What are you waiting for?” Several tens of guards seized the scholars who had said, “It’s well suited for an axle,” and killed them all.⁵⁸

Zhu held a deep prejudice against the literati, believing they manipulated men in power with their cunning rhetoric. It seems that at this stage—prior to Zhu Wen’s ascension to the throne—his primary concern was expanding his territory and defeating rivals. Perhaps in the throes of this bellicose climate, *wen*

civility seemed unnecessary, if not totally useless. As Fang Cheng-hua has pointed out, "The absence of literary background combined by a career focused on combat would make it difficult for Zhu to identify with the civil elite."⁵⁹

Not surprisingly, most military rulers and commanders of the time shared Zhu Wen's contempt for the literati. Once again, the aforementioned Shi Hongzhao of Later Han serves as a good example. According to the *New History*, Shi never respected literati, once saying, "I have a low tolerance for literati, for men who address me as 'soldier.'"⁶⁰ In a debate with other courtiers, he openly derided the civil officials and their literary skills: "Harmonizing the court and expelling tumult requires only long lances and large swords—the tufted awl [writing brush] is hardly up to the task!" One official bravely retorted, "Without the awl, however, how could you collect funding for arms?" Seemingly, Shi Hongzhao did not win the debate and "kept silent" with no further arguments.⁶¹ Yet the general obviously did not relinquish his deep-rooted hatred of literati and civil officials. When he heard that the young emperor bestowed jade belts and brocade robes on one commissioner in charge of music, Shi Hongzhao flew into rage and, approaching the man, said, "Our young warriors campaigning for empire lack due remuneration for their military units. What deeds of yours justify such rewards?" He stripped the official of the belts and robes and returned them to the court.⁶² Obviously, he felt the civil officials did not deserve the honors that the military had to fight to obtain.

Still, in this era during which martial force trumped literary prowess, an epoch of light *wen* and heavy *wu*, the interplay between civil and military remained complicated. This was particularly true when military rulers eagerly sought to legitimize their new regimes. Indeed, most upstart rulers of the day originated from a lower social stratum and needed to justify their ascendancies. By one account, on the eve of founding the Later Liang, one of Zhu Wen's brothers disparaged the rising monarch as a "mere commoner from Dangshan" (*Dangshan yi min* 碭山一民), their hometown, caustically remarking, "how ridiculous that you, third brother of the Zhus, should become Son of Heaven!"⁶³ Rulers like Zhu Wen urgently needed effective strategies to legitimate their rule. To this end, despite his antagonism toward men of scholarly learning, he encouraged wide participation of literati, especially those from the former Tang.

Several cases illustrate Zhu Wen's evolving attitude toward literati and cultural matters once he became a ruler. A former Tang degree holder named Du Xunhe 杜荀鶴 received great favors from Zhu Wen upon presenting the promising ruler an elegant poem, which used the falling of salubrious rain as a metaphor to praise the ruler's merits. After reviewing the poem, the ruler "exulted" (*da xi* 大喜) and immediately summoned Du Xunhe for a banquet. Thereafter, Zhu Wen built a mansion to accommodate the scholar and bestowed him bountiful gifts, "treating him with tremendous magnanimity."⁶⁴ Another scholar, Xu Yin 徐夔, enjoyed similar favor for submitting a piece of versed prose, in which

he eulogized Zhu Wen with such high-sounding lines as, “No one has seen the merits of the kings in early times, but today we all bear witness to the meritorious achievements of [the new ruler]!” Not surprisingly, Zhu Wen lavishly rewarded him.⁶⁵

Wang Jian, founding ruler of the Former Shu, employed similar tactics for the purpose of legitimation. A man of obscure birth who rose and seized power through military feats, Wang Jian could never escape the same doubts that haunted other usurpers like Zhu Wen; he faced the same urgent need to legitimate his imperial authority. Compared to his rivals, Wang Jian employed more scholars and treated literati with greater deference. When mentioning the characteristics of Wang Jian’s rule, Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) wrote with commendation: “In his time many esteemed personages of Tang took refuge in Shu and received respect from the Shu ruler.”⁶⁶ Even Ouyang Xiu, known for his unfavorable assessments of Five Dynasties pretenders, begrudgingly acknowledged that, “Once Wang Jian assumed a royal title, he drew upon the famous courtiers and distinguished families of Tang [to staff his own court].”⁶⁷ In this manner, the Former Shu attracted a large number of civilian officials, and Wang Jian, gradually though not completely, transformed his military dominion into an “empire,” his identity successfully shifting from that of military warlord to imperial sovereign.

However, this apparent change of attitude of those Five Dynasties rulers toward the literati did not fundamentally change either their military orientation or the character of their states.⁶⁸ Zhu Wen was still demanding and capricious, feared by all his literati—even the favored Du Xunhe. Once after meeting the Liang ruler, Du returned home afflicted with an anxiety-induced illness that caused him to take on a cadaverous aspect and to jet diarrhea several dozen times, leaving him on the verge of collapse.⁶⁹ Similarly, Wang Jian’s interaction with the literati was not always civil and polite, and his treatment of uncooperative literati could be ruthless. For example, Chen Xiang 陳翔, who had repeatedly discouraged Wang Jian from assuming the imperial title, was banished to a remote prefecture.⁷⁰ Yang Yunzhong 楊蘊中, a former *jinsshi* (Advanced Scholar) of Tang, was imprisoned for dubious causes.⁷¹ The story of another former Tang *jinsshi* named Zhang Daogu 張道古 reveals even more about Wang Jian’s capricious attitude toward the literati. Entering Shu in the beginning of the 900s, Zhang was hired only to suffer demotion due to the jealousy of colleagues. By the time a now-enthroned Wang Jian recalled Zhang in 907, the man clearly foresaw his doom: “As a former remonstrance official to the house of Tang, I can hardly sit at the same table with the animal-like literati [in Shu]; though now summoned, I shall definitely be demoted again.” He soon suffered the anticipated fate: demotion and death.⁷² By another account, Zhang Daogu’s demise appears even more tragic: “he was executed by the emperor for presenting a candid memorial delineating right and wrong.”⁷³ Clearly, a fundamental intolerance of remonstrance underlay Wang Jian’s eagerness to attract literati to his

court. He seldom tolerated challenges from literati, especially from those who questioned his aspirations to empire. Wang Jian and his rivals merely expected literati to provide routine administrative help and to furnish symbolic rhetoric that served to legitimate their frail authority.

"WOLVES SHEPHERDING THE PEOPLE": MILITARY MEN OF THE FIVE DYNASTIES

In reading the histories of the Five Dynasties, one unavoidably wonders why there were so many cruel military men who perpetrated horrendous deeds on innocent people. Historians of the Song dynasty, a new age of political unity and moral restoration, offered explanations shaped by the Confucian didacticism of that era. In Ouyang Xiu's *New History of the Five Dynasties*—a work noteworthy for its consistent tenor of harsh disapprobation—the author dismissively condemns the period as one of “extreme tumult.”⁷⁴ In his view, the collapse of Confucian propriety and righteousness had plunged state and society into a cycle of violence and cruelty, leaving them in the hands of evil men. “Amid the tumult of battles and banditry under the Five Dynasties,” he lamented, “rites and music were desecrated, the ‘three relationships’ and the ‘five constants’ cast off, and the institutions and literatures of the ancient kings swept away entirely.”⁷⁵ In these circumstances, Ouyang commented, “Rites and righteousness are the primary methods for governing men; society is erected on a foundation of integrity and shame. Without integrity, nothing is off limits; without shame, men are capable of anything. When ordinary men are so disposed, every sort of catastrophic turmoil and devastating defeat can occur. Worse yet, when high officials will accept or do anything, chaos for the realm and peril to empire can scarcely be avoided.”⁷⁶

Although Ouyang Xiu's blanket condemnation of the Five Dynasties has incurred deserving criticism from later historians, his assessment that the chaotic environment of the day was the primary cause of the era's unstinting violence and cruelty is accurate (though one might question his diagnosis of causality and maintain that his logic is circular). In a volatile climate where survival was the paramount concern, military contenders adopted any means at their disposal to better their lot. A civil official of the Later Tang once expressed his deep frustration: “Since the military chaos intensified, imperial rule has greatly declined. Whoever wields more might can win the day, invading, bullying, and robbing. . . . Wicked officials and unjust legal cases could never be recorded in full.”⁷⁷ Modern scholar Hugh Clark echoes this assessment in his research on the military rulers of late Tang and Five Dynasties, tersely characterizing the period as “a brutish interval” during which there were no real heroes, only “self-centered opportunistic parvenus emerging from the fringes of society . . . they were bandits who foisted injustice on others” and “survivors in a vicious cycle of violence and predation.”⁷⁸ In the benighted disorder, the ordinary people

who hopelessly struggled to maintain a semblance of stability in everyday life inevitably suffered the most. Perhaps for them, using the words of a contemporary commentator, “being a human was no better than being a ghost.”⁷⁹

Compared to the moralistic view espoused by Ouyang Xiu, Sima Guang, in his *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑) prescribed a more politically reflective interpretation of the crisis during the Five Dynasties, likely aiming to impart some realpolitik historical lessons to the Song thrones. Right after giving an account of the brutal Liu Zhiyuan, the founder of the Later Han, Sima Guang opined: “There was no benevolence in Gaozu [Liu Zhiyuan]’s killing of fifteen hundred innocent men at Youzhou; there was no trust in the case of ensnaring and murdering Zhang Lian; and there were no legal grounds for remitting the guilty Du Chongwei. Benevolence is for uniting the masses; Trust is for conducting the orders; Law is for punishing evil. Failing all three, how can one maintain the state?”⁸⁰ Clearly, in the eyes of Sima Guang, it was the absence of proper governing principles among kings of Five Dynasties that brought ruin upon state and society.

Admittedly, while Sima Guang’s emphasis on legal order and political rule was not inaccurate, it overlooked the restraints of the sociopolitical environment. In this volatile time, “the rise and fall of the regimes in the Five Dynasties emanated entirely from armaments.”⁸¹ Without exception, each and every founding ruler of the day rose to power by military means, starting their fortune either as soldiers in the Tang armies or as members of successful gangs.⁸² An indispensable element in the formation and existence of a regime, military power not only decided whether a polity could survive the cruel annexations of warlords in the last years of Tang, but functioned to create and maintain the power balance on which the regime depended to negotiate with its rivals. Under these circumstances, few rulers enforced laws to punish generals for wrongdoings and often forgave them in order to buy their personal loyalties. Li Keyong 李克用 (856–908), the governor of Hedong 河東 (today’s Shanxi), known for pampering his subordinates, once explained his reasons for not punishing guilty captains: “All governors of our day recruit brave men with material bounty; if I tether them with regulations, they will abandon me in times of peril. How, then, can I protect my domain?”⁸³ Li Maozhen 李茂貞 (856–924) of Qi 岐 (887–930) was also known for his loose control of soldiers, and Li Bian 李昇 (888–943) of the Southern Tang 南唐 (937–976) was said to have refused to punish guilty guards with military talents.⁸⁴ Another example is Later Tang emperor Zhuangzong’s 莊宗 (885–926) tolerance of the intrepid yet fiery Chang Congjian. Zhuangzong often “bent laws to pardon him” just because of the general’s frequent victories in battle.⁸⁵ Zhuangzong’s successor, Mingzong 明宗 (867–933), continued to bestow imperial largesse on the violent Chang Congjian.⁸⁶ Clearly, the rulers of Five Dynasties cherished the martial skills of talented commanders and could ill afford to enforce the laws to punish their crimes.

In some other cases, Five Dynasties rulers found themselves incapable of controlling military men who had their own armies and often paid mere lip service to court. For example, the aforementioned bloodthirsty Gao Li first served under Qian Liu 钱鏐 (852–932), king of Wu-Yue; when his notorious deeds finally incurred the ruler's intervention, the general casually betrayed his patron and lent his strength of five thousand men to Wu-Yue's rival state. With this personal army, Gao Li escaped punishment and received a new governorship from the patron state whose ruler, unperturbed by his new vassal's relish for human blood, valued Gao's military prowess.⁸⁷ In this manner, generals with their own armies often gained leverage in interacting with rulers in the chaotic Five Dynasties. A later scholar vividly encapsulated the attitude of such generals: "Those monarchs rose to power alongside me and flourished only due to my assistance; how possibly could they enforce the law to determine my life or death?"⁸⁸

In contrast to the fragile codependency between military commanders and their rulers, the hostile attitude of martial men toward literati usually led to horrible violence against the latter. Such a widespread hostility toward literati during the Five Dynasties not only reflects the pragmatism of the day when the fate of a warlord was mainly determined by martial force, but reveals a longstanding tension between the civil and the military, *wen* and *wu*. It is generally agreed that the social status of the military in traditional Chinese society was low. Though the martial orientation for the ruling elite from the fourth century to the mid-Tang to some extent improved the social position of military men, the relatively lowly backgrounds of most military upstarts during the late Tang and Five Dynasties exacerbated their inferiority complex and kindled the resentment they felt before civil officials, especially courtiers hailing from great clans of Tang.⁸⁹ According to Winston Lo, unlike literati whose cultural and social identity was relatively independent from the state, "There was really nothing out there that was solid on which they [military men] could anchor their self-image" and thus "their sense of self-worth was completely dependent on success in the service of the state."⁹⁰ Anxiety resulting from this dependency, coupled with deep-seeded jealousy of the literati's cultural cache, likely contributed to the grating tension between *wen* and *wu* during the Five Dynasties. Arguably, in this era of chaos when the martial waxed and the civil waned, military men availed themselves of the opportunity to exact "revenge," to validate their authority and worth by bullying the literati.⁹¹

If there existed a shared identity among the military men during the tumultuous era of the late Tang and Five Dynasties, it would be characterized by not only audacity, valor, and reckless pursuit of power and wealth, but also violence, cruelty, disdain for the literati, and brutal treatment of the ordinary people. With few exceptions, self-proclaimed monarchs and their commanders held no respect for human life and committed heinous atrocities against the weak, often for no reason. Perhaps this grim reality of this era of carnage was framed most succinctly and aptly in the *Old History's* description of bloodthirsty

Wang Gong: “strict and brutal, suspicious and jealous, atrocious and fond of killing, never caring about human life.”⁹²

The brutal martial legacy of Five Dynasties profoundly concerned historians of the following dynasty. At the very dawn of the Northern Song, founding emperor Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (r. 960–976) famously “dismantled the military over a glass of wine” (*bei jiu shi bingquan* 杯酒釋兵權), ushering in an era that “exalted the civil and despised the military” (*zhongwen, qingwu* 重文輕武).⁹³ Consistently Song historians like Ouyang Xiu crafted a narrative that juxtaposed the unruly martial depredations of the Five Dynasties era with the measured civil tranquility of the Song, a new period in which literati styled themselves as champions and defenders of a Confucian culture. Indeed, one might argue that the relish with which Song historians recounted the violence and ugliness, the bad behavior, of the preceding period, primarily served to bring their own idealized elegant “good behavior” into clearer resolution.

NOTES

1. For example, Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Wudai shi* (hereafter *XWDS*), 10.107.
2. *XWDS*, 49.558.
3. Song historians labeled regimes of Five Dynasties as “illegitimate” or “wei” (偽), thus justified the Song as one of the dynasties along the “legitimate succession” (*zhengtong* 正統) in Chinese history. For the theory and practice of “Legitimate Succession” in Chinese (particularly Song) historiography, see Rao Zongyi, *Zhongguo shixue shang zhi zhengtong lun*; Chen Fangming, “Songdai zhengtong lun de xingcheng beijing jiqi neirong”; Davis, “Historiography as Politics,” 38–40, 62nn87–88; Davis, “Historical Critic or Cultural Mediator—Ouyang Xiu on Legitimate Rule.” For a general discussion of Song historians’ adoption of *zhengtong* in history writing, see Hongjie Wang, *Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China*, 3–6.
4. For a discussion of varied perspectives and reading strategies concerning Five Dynasties historiography, see Wang Hongjie, *Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China*, 180–185.
5. Xue Juzheng, *Jiu Wudai shi* (hereafter *JWDS*), 98.1302. Similar expressions can be found in *XWDS*, 51.583.
6. *XWDS*, 39.426.
7. *XWDS*, 1.1 and *JWDS*, 1.2. About Zhu Wen’s origin and early life, see Sun Guangxian, *Beimeng suoyan* (hereafter *BMSY*), 17.266; Somers, “The End of the T’ang,” 781–782.
8. For Zhu Wen’s rise to power, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power*, 48–84.
9. *XWDS*, 42.462.
10. Tao Yue, *Wudai shi bu* (hereafter *WDSB*), 1.1b; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* (hereafter *ZZTJ*), 266.8687; see also Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power*, 66–67.
11. Zhang Qixian, *Luoyang jinshen jiuwen ji* (hereafter *LYJSJWJ*), 1.1.
12. *ZZTJ*, 265.8642–8643; *JWDS*, 18.253; *XWDS*, 43.470–471; see also Standen, “The Five Dynasties,” 48.
13. *JWDS*, 2.39.
14. *JWDS*, 19.255–266.

15. *BMSY*, 17.268.
16. *XWDS*, 13.137.
17. *XWDS*, 10.99.
18. *XWDS*, 30.327.
19. *XWDS*, 30.335.
20. *XWDS*, 30.335.
21. *JWDS*, 107.1414–1415.
22. *JWDS*, 107.1415; *XWDS*, 30.335.
23. *XWDS*, 30.327.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *XWDS*, 30.327–329.
26. *JWDS*, 136.1818.
27. *ZZTJ*, 258.8420.
28. *ZZTJ*, 258.8414; *JWDS*, 136.1817; *XWDS*, 63.785; Song Qi and Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tang shu* (hereafter *XTS*), 224B.6408.
29. *ZZTJ*, 258.8418; *XTS*, 224B.6409; *BMSY*, *yiwen* 2.394; Lu Zhen, *Jiuguo zhi* (hereafter *JGZ*), 6.15a.
30. *XWDS*, 63.790; *ZZTJ*, 269.8784.
31. *ZZTJ*, 263.8581; *JGZ*, 6.7a. Note that Wang Jian's cruelty was also sometimes balanced with his generosity, especially in his early career when he greatly relied on his military officers for competing with other warlords in Sichuan. For a discussion of his combination of reward and discipline in ruling troops, see Hongjie Wang, *Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China*, 93–98.
32. Hong Mai, *Rongzhai xubi*, 4.2. For Shizong's heroism, see Davis, "The Heroism of Chou Shih-tsung in the Eleventh Century," 1134–1148.
33. *JWDS*, 118.1572.
34. *XWDS*, 65.811; See also *JWDS*, 135.1806.
35. *ZZTJ*, 287.9376; *JWDS*, 135.1809.
36. Hu Sanxing 胡三省's comment in *ZZTJ*, 287.9376.
37. *XWDS*, 30.330–331; *JWDS*, 107.1404.
38. *XWDS*, 30.330–331; for the meaning of the gesture of raising three fingers, see *JWDS*, 98.1307; Hu Sanxing's notes in *ZZTJ*, 285.9322.
39. *ZZTJ*, 277.9067–9068.
40. His painting "Mounted Archery" (She qi tu 射骑图) is preserved in the National Palace Museum in Taipei.
41. *JWDS*, 105.1386; *XWDS*, 18.195.
42. For a survey of cannibalism in Chinese history, see Chong, *Cannibalism in China*, and its Chinese version, Zheng Linlai, *Zhongguo gudai de shiren*. More reasons for cannibalism in Chinese history also exist, for example, see Knapp, "Chinese Filial Cannibalism," 135–149.
43. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 200B.5398.
44. *ZZTJ*, 284.9294.
45. *JWDS*, 70.929.
46. *XWDS*, 47.520–521.
47. *JWDS*, 94.1242.
48. *XWDS*, 53.606.

49. Ibid.
50. *XWDS*, 63.605–606; *JWDS*, 109.1441–1444.
51. *XWDS*, 42.458.
52. *JWDS*, 61.820.
53. *JGZ*, 2.2.
54. *ZZTJ*, 267.8717.
55. For a general discussion on the relationship of *wen* and *wu* in Chinese history, see Louie and Edwards, “Chinese Masculinity,” 135–148. For discussions on the issue in the Five Dynasties, see Wang Hongjie, “The Civil Pursuits of a Military Man in Tenth-Century China,” 7–37; Wang Fengxiang, “Cong shiren mingyun kan Wudai de zhongwu qingwen fengqi,” 44–47.
56. Davis, “Martial Men and Military Might,” 6–7.
57. Zhao Yi, *Nian'er shi zhaji*, 22.6b.
58. *ZZTJ*, 256.8644. See also *LYJSJWJ*, 1.1; *JWDS*, 2.38.
59. Fang Cheng-hua, “The Price of Orthodoxy,” 59.
60. *XWDS*, 30.331.
61. *XWDS*, 30.332.
62. *XWDS*, 30.331–332.
63. *XWDS*, 13.132–333; For Zhu Wen’s background, see Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power*, 26–28.
64. *LYJSJWJ*, 1.1.
65. Ibid.
66. *ZZTJ*, 266.8685.
67. *XWDS*, 63.787.
68. For a detailed discussion, see Wang, “The Civil Pursuits of a Military Man in Tenth-Century China,” 7–37.
69. *LYJSJWJ*, 1.1.
70. Chen Zhan, *Xu Tang shu*, 62.4b; Chao Buzhi, *Jilei ji*, 64.8a.
71. Wu Renchen, *Shiguo chungiu*, 115.1714.
72. He Guangyuan, *Jianjie lu*, 1.9a–b, 4.5a–b; *BMSY*, 5.114; Zhang Tangying, *Shu taowu*, 1.7a–b.
73. *Jianjie lu*, 4.5b.
74. *XWDS*, 34.369.
75. *XWDS*, 17.188.
76. *XWDS*, 54.611.
77. Ji Huang and Liu Yong, *Qinding xu tongzhi*, 285.10.
78. Clark, “Scoundrels, Rogues, and Refugees,” 69–70.
79. *JWDS*, 134.1789–1790.
80. *ZZTJ*, 287.9379.
81. *XWDS*, 27.297.
82. For the origins of the founders of the regional regimes during this time, see Wang, *The Structure of Power*, 47–118; Standen, “The Five Dynasties,” 39–74; Clark, “The Southern Kingdoms,” 140–159; Gu Licheng, *Zouxian nanfang*, 43–56.
83. *JWDS*, 26.359.
84. For Li Maozhen, see *ZZTJ*, 266.8676; for Li Bian, see Zheng Wenbao, *Nan Tang jinshi*, 21b–22a.

85. *JWDS*, 94.1241–1242. See also *XWDS*, 47.520–521.
86. *JWDS*, 94.1241–1242.
87. *ZZTJ*, 267.8720–8721; *JGZ*, 2.2.
88. Wang Fuzhi, *Du Tongjian lun*, 30.646.
89. For the position of the military men in Chinese history, see Lo, "The Self-Image of the Chinese Military in Historical Perspective," 1–21.
90. *Ibid.*, 20–21
91. For the military men's lack of appreciation for culture during the Five Dynasties, see Wang, "The Civil Pursuits of a Military Man," 31–32.
92. *JWDS*, 14.200.
93. For a general survey of the founding of Northern Song and the policies of early reigns, see Lau Nap-yin and Huang K'uan-chung, "Founding and Consolidation of the Sung Dynasty. For a discussion of "*bei jiu shi bingquan*," see Lau, "*Bei jiu shi bingquan xins-huo zhiyi*" and Wang Yuji, "*Lun bei jiu shi bingquan*."

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A “VILLAIN-MONK” BROUGHT DOWN BY A VILLEIN-GENERAL

A Forgotten Page in Tang Monastic Warfare and State-Saṃgha Relations

JINHUA CHEN

As indicated by its title, the two principal figures in this chapter are a “villainous monk” and a “villein-turned-general,” a lowly slave (villein) who rose to a position of martial prominence. The Buddhist monk never confronted the general on the battlefield; on the contrary, the two likely cooperated on several military ventures that won them prestige and the favor of contemporaneous rulers. Changing vicissitudes compromised this unlikely partnership: in the political and ideological flux of the time, opposition to the monk grew, or, more accurately, opposition grew against the political faction that backed him. The general necessarily wed himself to this burgeoning opposition; eventually, on the wrong side of this struggle for power, the Buddhist monk fell, a victim of the intramural conflict. This chapter brings into clear resolution two interconnected phenomena. First, attitudes of the medieval Chinese saṃgha toward violence were wildly inconsistent: Buddhism’s theoretic prohibition against violence was irreconcilable with the saṃgha’s inevitable engagement in warfare. Second, Buddhism was inextricably intertwined with court politics: the sacred world of the saṃgha existed in constant collusion and collision with secular authority (the state) in early Tang times.

Less than a generation into the nascent Tang dynasty, competing factions, with different backgrounds and objectives, clustered around the heir apparent, Li Jiancheng 李建成 (589–626), and his ambitious brother, Li Shimin 李世民 (599–649); posthumously Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626–649). The latter murdered his older brother in the coup of 626 and eventually forced his father, Tang Gaozu 唐高祖 (r. 618–626); i.e., Li Yuan 李淵 (566–635), to abdicate in his favor. Buddhist monks were involved in the faction-ridden court politics of the early Tang. Through a case study of a little-known monk, Faya 法雅 (?–629), a favorite of Gaozu who played a key role in the defense of the newly founded

Tang against Turk encroachments, this chapter attempts to analyze these new features and patterns of early Tang state–saṃgha relations.

Additionally, this chapter aims to shed new light on the apparent contradiction between Buddhism’s general prohibitions against violence on the one hand and the saṃgha’s frequent and profound involvement in warfare on the other, whether to protect its own property or to court and enhance secular patronage.¹ Nonviolence is an overarching principle of the Buddhist faith. Not only is a Buddhist follower forbidden to resort to violence, but he or she is also exhorted to avoid exposure to warfare, military maneuvers, or even the display of arms. The *Sifen lü* 四分律 (Four-part vinaya), articulating one tradition’s expectations for monastic conduct, cites the Buddha’s warning to his disciples that a monk who spends a single or several nights at a barracks, witnesses fighting between two armies, or observes martial displays of power involving elephants and horses has committed an offense requiring expiation.² In addition, a Buddhist temple was considered a *daochang* 道場, an “arena for practice” (or maybe “site of enlightenment”);³ *daochang* was the Chinese rendering of *bodhi-maṇḍa*, originally a reference to the ground beneath the *bodhi* tree where Śākyamuni achieved enlightenment. Thus, using a Buddhist temple for military purposes was tantamount to the profanation of a sacred site where enlightenment was sought, turning it into an arsenal for slaying living beings. Nevertheless, the Buddha is also reported to have recognized the necessity of defensive martial force, and to have sanctioned the association of monks with armed men to protect the saṃgha. In other words, the Buddha purportedly suggested that violence was permissible under particular circumstances as long as it was not exercised by a Buddhist monk or nun.⁴

Thus, even though the Buddha ostensibly sanctioned righteous warfare for lay-followers, he did not endorse direct use of violence by a monk or nun. From this vantage, Faya, the seventh-century Buddhist monk who both killed and coerced monks to kill, faced the condemnation of contemporary Buddhist monks and scholars.

A MONK WHO FORCED OTHER MONKS TO KILL: TWO VERSIONS

Faya’s martial actions are cast in a negative light by his contemporary Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), a well-respected Buddhist historian, bibliographer, biographer, and a renowned vinaya expert.⁵

Faya, Xue Ju, and Zhishi: Version One

In one of his polemics, *Ji gujin foday lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 (A Collection [of Documents Related to] the Debates between Buddhism and Daoism from Past to Present), Daoxuan reports the following intriguing confrontation between a contemporary Buddhist defender and an “evil monk”:

At the beginning of the Wude era (618–26), Xue Ju 薛舉 (?–618) pressed the eastern border of the Tang empire. Therefore, one thousand strong-willed and resolute⁶ monks were selected to enter the army (lit. “military canopy”). One monk, Faya, personally took the role as head of recruitment [of monk-soldiers]. The whole capital was in an uproar, with Buddhist monks not knowing what to do. [Zhi]shi 智實 (604–638)⁷ railed to the assembly, “Faya is an evil demon!” He seized and expelled Faya. Faya reported this matter to [Gaozu, the current] Emperor Emeritus, who ordered that [Zhishi] be laicized. Thereafter, [Zhishi] visited lecture centers everywhere, eschewing vulgar customs. At the beginning of the Zhen-guan era (627–649), after the Faya incident, an imperial edict was issued ordering [Zhishi] to renounce secular life and take up residence at his original temple.⁸

Xue Ju was a ferocious warlord who emerged toward the end of the Sui dynasty (581–618) as one of the contenders for supreme power, establishing a local regime in present-day Lanzhou 蘭州 and declaring himself the “Overlord of the Western Qin” (*Xi Qin bawang* 西秦霸王). After his sudden death, son Xue Ren-gao 薛仁果 (?–618) carried on the campaign against the Tang.

If we accept the historical veracity of Daoxuan’s narrative, Buddhist monk Faya aided the Tang campaign against the Xue threat by organizing an army of more than a thousand monk-soldiers. Faya’s effort was strongly opposed by another monk, Zhishi. Although Zhishi’s struggle resulted in his temporary expulsion from the saṃgha, he successfully foiled Faya’s plan and rescued many monks from conscription into military service (and thus from being forced to slaughter against Buddhist proscriptions on violence and taking the lives of sentient beings).

Faya, Turks, and Zhishi: Version Two

On another occasion, when writing a biography of Zhishi for inclusion in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks), Daoxuan provides a far more detailed, and quite different, version of this story:

In the seventh year of the Wude era (624), “the Xianyun (northern barbarians) were in blazing ascendancy,”⁹ with war beacons repeatedly signaling incursions. They approached the northern borders, where the army [of the Tang] rebuffed them. There was a monk called Faya who the former emperor highly esteemed. Emperor Wu (i.e., Gaozu), out of his high regard, bestowed concubines upon [Faya], allowing him to misbehave himself as egregiously as he pleased. The saṃgha was puzzled, none daring to report [Faya’s misdeeds to the authorities]. [Faya] memorialized that one thousand brave monks from monasteries in the capital be enrolled

in the army. A decree was issued in favor of this memorial. Faya then gathered and started to train [these monks], forming a separate brigade. Pressured by imperial power, all [opponents] were silenced, and none dared to refuse. Zhishi, then twenty-one [*sui*], knew well what [machinations] Faya harbored. Fearing that Faya was plotting illicit schemes that, once exposed, would endanger the great Dharma, he sent a letter to Faya.¹⁰

After describing the damage and turmoil caused by Faya's coercion of monks into military service, Daoxuan quotes Zhishi's letter in full.¹¹ First, the letter censures Faya for failing to duly appreciate the support and patronage of emperor Gaozu. Rather than influencing His Majesty with the Dharma, Zhishi seethes that the ingrate Faya committed crimes as heinous as those perpetrated by Sunakssatra and Devadatta, two notorious "evil monks" in India. Based on these transgressions, Zhishi sternly urges Faya to leave the *saṃgha* of his own accord so that the purity, harmony, and integrity of the monastic community could be restored.

Zhishi's letter merely enflamed Faya, however, spurring him to assemble the army of monks with even greater fervor:

Zhishi's letter exasperated Faya further. With even more eagerness, he oversaw and controlled the monk-soldiers. Weapons were made ready and the army was scheduled to embark. Dashing among the assembled troops, Zhishi cried aloud, claiming that the erratic and rebellious acts [of Faya] endangered the wheel of great Dharma and were nothing but [deeds perpetrated by a] demon. At that time, the thousand [martial] monks started to cry and howl, reducing observers to tears. Thereafter, Zhishi grasped Faya and pummeled him several times, pronouncing, "Now I'll subdue the demon so that [people may distinguish] evil from right!" Faya reported the incident to the emperor [i.e., Gaozu], who said, "This monk is too rude. He must be investigated and punished for this crime." Zhishi was promptly fettered and jailed, but showed no hint of fear. When he was about to be sentenced, Xiao Yu 蕭瑀 (575–648), the vice director of the Department of State Affairs, and others memorialized the emperor that Zhishi had a reputation for his diligence in seeking the Dharma. An imperial edict was then issued ordering that Zhishi be laicized. The [military] enrollment of the thousand monks was terminated, and they were sent back to their temples. Although Zhishi was returned to the secular world, the military service imposed on the monks was called off. Pleased and satisfied at heart, [Zhishi] felt no regrets.¹²

The conflict between the two monks resulted in the imperial condemnation and forced laicization of Zhishi. Only the forceful intervention of several courtiers sympathetic to Buddhism, one being Xiao Yu, a descendant of the

“Buddhist emperor” Liang Wudi 梁武帝 (r. 502–549), saved the strident young monk from a death sentence. Though Zhishi was punished by excommunication, his heroic action won the saṃgha a remarkable victory: recruitment of Buddhist monks for military service was terminated. The soldier-monks were released from military service and sent back to their home temples. Though stripped of his monastic robes, Zhishi reportedly felt a clear sense of pride at the service he rendered the saṃgha.

Zhishi did not have to wait long, however, for a fresh opportunity to strike Faya. This time he obliquely sought to prevent his rival from corrupting the saṃgha:

In the first year of Zhenguan (627), by an imperial edict the secretarial censor Du Zhenglun 杜正倫 (575?–658)¹³ was dispatched to regulate the Buddha Dharma, [with the aim of] purging illegal and unqualified [monks from the saṃgha]. Fearing that Faya might take advantage of his previous scheme and implicate pure followers [of Buddhism], Zhishi sent a letter to the envoy.¹⁴

Like the earlier epistle, Zhishi’s letter to Du Zhenglun is preserved in its entirety in Daoxuan’s biography for Zhishi.¹⁵ The ever-zealous Zhishi, after detailing his own profound piety, launches into a polemic delineating Faya’s many offenses: he failed to honor the exceptional esteem that the Tang ruler granted him. On the contrary, Faya warped sacred and lofty Buddhist practices to his own deviant ends, seeking to satisfy his bloodlust; he attempted to arm one thousand monks and push them onto the battlefield, in effect stripping them of their robes; and he disparaged the scripture, to the immeasurable sadness and indignation of countless Buddhist faithful. No match could be found in history, Zhishi states, for the horrendous damage and disgrace that Faya had brought upon the saṃgha. Zhishi then concludes with an appeal to Du Zhenglun, a “capable and upright court official trusted by a sagacious sovereign,” to protect the Dharma by purging Faya from the Buddhist community.

Though Du Zhenglun did not purge Faya, this second letter seems to have anticipated Zhishi’s rehabilitation and Faya’s fall, for Daoxuan continues:

Later, Faya was executed because of his unruliness. Du Zhenglun had this matter reported [to the emperor], who issued an edict, stating, “In the past, Zhishi impeached Faya, showing that he had anticipated Faya’s rudeness and rebelliousness. Since his (Zhishi’s) laicization, he has never been deficient in his practices required by the precepts. It is proper that he be allowed to leave his [lay] household as before.” Zhishi thereby returned to his [old] temple where he thoroughly reviewed his studies. Collecting and analyzing the profundities [in Buddhism], he enjoyed a lofty reputation in the capital.¹⁶

Thus, according to Daoxuan, Du Zhenglun did not immediately present Zhishi’s strongly worded epistolary accusation to the throne. Only after Faya’s eventual disgrace and execution did the censor bring it to the emperor’s attention.

In Daoxuan’s accounts, Zhishi—in stark distinction to the villainous Faya—is clearly a good, devout monk, a staunch defender of the Buddhist faith. Records indicate that Zhishi greatly impressed all with his profound understanding of Buddhism and his elegant manner. In particular, his precocity won the admiration of the great monk-philosopher Jizang 吉藏 (549–623), who reportedly patted the crown of his head fondly and twisted the curl between his eyebrows, foretelling that he would become a sage “following the footsteps of Śākyamuni.”¹⁷ Daoxuan also describes Zhishi’s role in the saṃgha’s protest against Taizong’s 637 decree that prioritized Daoism over Buddhism. Zhishi accompanied ten “monks of virtue,” including Fachang 法常 (566–645)¹⁸ and Falin 法琳 (527–640), to Luoyang where Taizong was then residing. The eminent monks protested until the government ordered them to desist. Ignoring the command, ardent Zhishi persisted. Infuriated, the authorities seized him and had him flogged. Wounded grievously in body and spirit, Zhishi died a few months later, a Buddhist martyr.¹⁹

Certainly, there are inconsistencies in Daoxuan’s two versions of this story. For instance, there are different dates for the Faya-Zhishi conflict, 618 and 624. These versions also diverge on the identification of the enemy Faya’s monk-army was meant to combat: Xue Ju in the first and the Turks in the second. In the first version the emperor approved Faya’s proposal to build a special monk-army; the second version merely confirms that Faya implemented the government’s edict to create a monk-army.²⁰ One thing comes through with resounding clarity in both versions: from the vantage of vinaya master Daoxuan, Faya was an apostate, an “evil monk” accused of turning Buddhist temples into places for slaughter and prostitution.²¹ With this charge, Zhishi probably is referring to the fact that Faya used his temple to train the monk-soldiers and accepted the women Emperor Gaozu proffered.

Zhishi’s accusation gives the misleading impression that use of a Buddhist temple for military purposes was a rare practice. Faya’s utilization of temple grounds for martial training was not unprecedented. Though one of the main causes for Faya’s demonization was his military training for monks, Daoxuan himself, without the same negative judgment, records other instances of military training in Buddhist establishments. The following passage appears in the chronicler’s biography of the monk Zhiman 智滿 (551–628):

In the fifth year of Wude (622), “the Xianyun tribe (the Turks) became rampant,” “their war carriages fully accoutered.”²² Due to the vigor and bravery of the śramaṇas in Mayi 馬邑 (in the northeast of present-day Shuoxian 朔縣, Shanxi), the signal beacons were repeatedly raised and

related without fail. Taiyuan, near Wuxiang 武鄉 (present-day Wuxiang, Shanxi), was the site where the military practiced. Therefore, more than two thousand monks were selected on imperial order to fill the “two garrisons” (of Taiyuan and Mayi).²³

This record makes it clear that the government ordered the enrollment of more than two thousand monks into the Tang garrisons at Mayi and Taiyuan. Although this special recruitment happened outside Chang’an and two years before Faya attempted to press monks in the capital into military service, it indicates that he was not initiating a radical new practice, but following one already established by the state.

There are many additional examples. When Yang Liang 楊諒 (575–605) rebelled against his brother, Sui emperor Yangdi, he used Xingguosi 興國寺 as his “armory” and set up his soldiers’ mess hall in another temple.²⁴ Eventual Tang founder Li Yuan posted a unit of his uprising army at this same Xingguosi.²⁵ Late Tang Li Hanzhi 李罕之 (842–899), a Buddhist monk become general, placed his headquarters at Shengshansi 聖善寺, a cosmopolitan monastery in Luoyang and a center of East Asian Buddhist art and culture from its founding at the beginning of the eighth century.²⁶

THE FALL OF AN “EVIL MONK”: FAYA IN OFFICIAL SOURCES

While Daoxuan recounts Faya’s defiance of Buddhist precepts against violence and killing, and his thwarted attempt to deliver military aid to the newly established Tang government, his record leaves many details untold. Who was Faya? Why did Gaozu hold him in such high esteem? Why and how was he disgraced, indicted, and eventually executed? What were the consequences of the Faya case? In addition to the proscription against killing, were there other reasons for Zhishi’s objection to Faya’s martial role? To answer these questions, we must necessarily extend our scrutiny beyond the monastic sources we have already examined.

Official state sources like the *Old Tang History* attribute Faya’s demise not to his role in forcing Buddhist monks into military service, but to the deep enmity he harbored against the state, when, after Gaozu abdicated to Taizong, the monk fell from imperial grace:

In the third year of the Zhenguan era (629), the śramaṇa, Faya, who had enjoyed access to the two palace compounds due to imperial favor, was forbidden [from entering the palaces]. Faya, complaining and uttering evil words, was executed. Du Ruhui 杜如晦 (585–630), the director of the military bureau, was in charge of investigating his case. Faya claimed that Pei Ji 裴寂 (573–632) was aware of his (Faya’s) words. Pei Ji replied, “Faya only talked about when epidemics were to break out. Prior to this,

never have I heard him utter evil words.” Faya sought to prove [this claim]. But because of this, [Pei Ji] lost his office, his appanage was cut in half, and he was banished to his place of origin. Pei Ji begged to remain in the capital. Taizong rebuked him, saying, “In reckoning your merits and contributions, [We find that] you would not have been promoted to such prominence. It was simply thanks to the grace [of the retired emperor] that you held such a lofty position. During the Wude era (618–626), the political and legal systems were seriously flawed, and the officials were indolent: for this you are to blame! Because of the old feelings that We harbor for you, We are not going to subject you to capital punishment, but rather We will send you back to sweep your [ancestral] tombs. Why do you still refuse to accept [this]?” Pei Ji therefore returned to Puzhou.²⁷

Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) provides a specific date for Pei Ji’s indictment: February 27, 629.²⁸ The compiler of the *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Document Storehouse of the Original Tortoise), Wang Qingruo 王欽若 (962–1025), dates this event one lunar year earlier: March 4, 628.²⁹

Pei Ji was arguably Li Yuan’s most trusted confidant. Eventually, due to his role in helping Li Yuan obtain supreme power and solidify his powerbase after founding the dynasty, Pei enjoyed the first Tang emperor’s sustained favor. After helping to persuade Li Yuan to rebel in the waning years of the Sui, Pei Ji provided the future Tang founding ruler a great deal of material and human support, including nine million bushels of rice, fifty thousand swathes of multicolored silk, and forty thousand sets of armor. When Li Yuan was established as Tang emperor, he recognized the unique contributions of Li Shimin, Pei Ji, and Liu Wenjing to the foundation of the Tang. Li Yuan decreed that these three men, called the “three chief meritorious officials from the Taiyuan period,” were to be pardoned from the death penalty twice.

Both Pei Ji’s role in and attitude toward the court coup Li Shimin staged in 626—a confrontation that resulted in Li Jiancheng’s murder, Gaozu’s abdication, and Li Shimin’s enthronement—are unclear. The considerable respect Li Shimin showed him in the years following his assumption of power seems to indicate that Pei Ji had tactfully distanced himself from the losing Li Jiancheng clique. In 628, Taizong invited Pei Ji to share his gold imperial carriage with his confidant Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (597?–659).³⁰ However, the cordiality between the two did not last long. Only one year later, Pei Ji was implicated in the Faya case.

MA SANBAO (?–629)³¹ AND THE FALL OF FAYA

The official sources examined here show that Faya’s fall led to the undoing of an eminent official, Pei Ji, who, not unlike Faya, had enjoyed Gaozu’s trust and confidence. Other secular sources reveal that another one of Gaozu’s confidants, Ma Sanbao, exposed Faya’s “rebellious words and deeds.”

In the Northern Song encyclopedia, the *Cefu yuangui*, there is an account of this slave-turned-general who directly instigated Faya's downfall:

Ma Sanbao was the commandant of the Gate Guard Command [assigned to the Establishment of] the heir apparent, acting as a general of the Army of the Celestial Cornucopia. After the emperor (Taizong) acceded the throne, a śramaṇa called Faya conspired to rebel by means of the black arts. Ma Sanbao, learning of this, memorialized [the emperor]. Faya was eventually executed. [Ma] was then appointed general-in-chief and bestowed five hundred bolts of silk, with his nobility rank promoted to duke.³²

Initially, Ma Sanbao was a “boy slave” (*jiatong* 家僮) of the family of Princess Pingyang 平陽公主 (?–623), Gaozu's third daughter who married General Chai Shao 柴紹 (588–638). Princess Pingyang's biography in the *Old Tang History* is followed by a biographical note for Ma Sanbao, underscoring their close relationship.³³

Several sources characterize Ma Sanbao as a cunning man.³⁴ When the princess tried to enroll warriors for an armed force in Huxian 鄠縣 (present-day Huxian 戶縣, Shaanxi) in support of her father, then competing to wrest supreme power from the hands of the Sui rulers, she ordered Ma Sanbao to seek the support of a “barbarian rebel” (*huzei* 胡賊), He Panren 何潘仁.³⁵ Having control of an independent force in Sizhu yuan 司竹園 (in present-day Zhouzhi 翥屋, Shaanxi), He Panren proclaimed himself “area commander-in-chief” (*zongguan* 總管).³⁶ Ma Sanbao persuaded He Panren to transfer his loyalty to the princess, then secured for her the allegiance of several additional local warlords, including Li Zhongwen 李仲文, Xiang Shanzhi 向善志, and Qiu Shili 丘師利, each controlling several thousand soldiers.³⁷ These troops helped buttress the princess's army: when the Sui regent (*liushou* 留守) of the capital³⁸ launched repeated assaults on the princess, Ma Sanbao and He Panren defeated him.

His military service in this period brought him various rewards, including the prestige title Left Grand Master for Splendid Happiness (*zuo guanglu daifu* 左光祿大夫), bestowed after Li Yuan—having crossed the Yellow River and entered Chang'an—became the real power wielder behind Sui puppet emperor Gongdi. Ma Sanbao greeted Li Shimin at Zhulin palace 竹林宮 with a number of soldiers-recruits, and later accompanied the young prince-general to subdue the greater capital region, a meritorious act that won him the above-mentioned position of commandant of the Gate Guard Command.³⁹

Moreover, Ma Sanbao aided Taizong in the suppression of Xue Rengao's army, earning a promotion to general of the Courageous Guard.⁴⁰ He also followed his former lord, Chai Shao, to attack the Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 in Minzhou 岷州 (present-day Gansu). Acting as vanguard, he smashed through enemy ranks,

killed a prominent Tuyuhun prince, and took several thousand captives. All these merits won him a title of nobility—the subprefectural duke of Xinxing 新興縣公.

Likely in the summer of 626, Ma Sanbao, as commandant of the Gate Guard Command and general of the Army of the Celestial Cornucopia, defeated the Turks in Weichuan 渭川.⁴¹ Drawing on cunning and martial skill, Ma Sanbao rose through repeated promotions from lowly slave to general-in-chief of the Left Courageous Guard.⁴²

In November 626, shortly after he accepted his father's abdication, Taizong enfeoffed “meritorious officials,” granting Ma Sanbao three hundred households.⁴³ In addition, among 187 “meritorious officials” named by Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805) in 781, Ma Sanbao is listed as number 147 and identified as both the duke of Xinxing 新興公 and the general-in-chief of the left Metropolitan Guard.⁴⁴ This seems to be the highest position to which Ma Sanbao was promoted, either during his lifetime or posthumously. Ma Sanbao's biographical note in the *Old Tang History* ends with the information that following his death in the third year of the Zhenguan era (629), Taizong suspended court for one day and bestowed the posthumous honorific “Loyalty” (zhong 忠).

These sources on Ma Sanbao attest to his closeness to several members of the imperial Li-Tang family. First and foremost, Ma Sanbao became, at a pivotal juncture, a major ally and assistant of Gaozu's daughter, the Pingyang Princess. He also performed brilliantly on a military expedition led by Chai Shao, Pingyang's husband. Last, but definitely not least, Ma Sanbao infused the army of Li Shimin, Taizong, with much-needed new blood and helped the prince-general secure victory over greater Chang'an, removing a number of powerful contenders—namely Xue Ju and Xue Rengao—at a fragile moment. Although none of these historical sources proffers any hint as to how Ma Sanbao learned of Faya's “rebellious words and deeds,” it seems plausible that he, enjoying intimate connections with the imperial family, had formerly befriended Faya. However, shrewdly sensing the shifting political winds at the beginning of the Zhenguan era—after Li Yuan's coerced removal from the throne the influence of intimates of abdicated emperor like Faya waned precipitously, placing such men in untenable, perilous circumstances in court—Ma Sanbao turned on Faya. The curious instrumental manner in which Ma Sanbao used Faya against the retired emperor intimates that two must have at one point cooperated on one, or even several, military ventures.

Ma Sanbao's instrumental use of Faya as a weapon against the retired emperor can be illustrated through the following two facts. First, the only known direct victim of the Faya case was Pei Ji, one of the most prominent and staunch supporters of Gaozu. In Taizong's harsh criticism of his father's governance, he singled out and scapegoated Pei Ji for administrative malfeasance. Second, immediately following Pei Ji's demotion and exile, Gaozu was forced to surrender Taiji Basilica 太極殿 to Taizong. Though already ruling as emperor in name

and reality, Taizong still lived in the residence of the heir apparent at the time, apparently vacated by his elder brother:

On the *yihai* 乙亥 day of the fourth month [of the third year of Zhenguan; May 2, 629], summertime, the Emperor Emeritus shifted his residence to the Palace of Amplifying Righteousness (Hongyi gong 弘義宮), which was renamed “Palace of Great Peace” (Da’an gong 大安宮). It was not until the moment that the emperor (Taizong) ascended to the Taiji Basilica (that is, became an emperor both in fact and in name).⁴⁵

Only then, two years and eight months after his enthronement, did Taizong move from the Eastern Palace of the heir apparent and truly occupy the spatial and symbolic center of the whole imperial palace compound—and the whole empire.

The sequence of these events—each attesting to Taizong’s burgeoning power—was as follows: (1) the arrest of Faya, (2) the indictment of Pei Ji (February 27, 629), and (3) Gaozu’s surrender of Taiji Hall to Taizong (May 2, 629). That these events took place in rapid succession in the first half of 629 strongly suggests that the Faya case expedited the undermining of Gaozu, leading to his virtual “palace arrest.”

BUDDHISM AND VIOLENCE IN MEDIEVAL CHINA: THE FAYA CASE IN WIDER CONTEXT

Daoxuan’s inclusion of Zhishi’s letters in his narratives serves to portray Faya not merely as a wicked monk personally involved in warfare, violence, and killing, but as a deviant *śramaṇa* who forced other Buddhist monks to violate the precepts by arming them and inciting them to slaughter. Yet other sources, including some provided by Daoxuan himself, directly contradict this impression. Evidence shows that medieval Chinese Buddhist monks often participated in wars, fighting, and other forms of violence—whether voluntarily, or more or less against their will—despite the Buddha’s prohibitions against *saṃgha* involvement in warfare. The *saṃgha* was involved in this theoretically forbidden activity in different ways.

First, the history of medieval China is rife with examples of Buddhist monks involved in warfare as military chaplains and counselors. Monks were sought out not only for spiritual guidance, but also for their advice on military issues. They were summoned to the battlefield to perform a range of services, including conducting esoteric or shamanic rituals intended to effect decisive victories and conjuring illusions to scare away rival soldiers.⁴⁶ Buddhist monks were called upon to give lectures about right and wrong. They comforted soldiers by instructing them on life’s transience, the emptiness of life and death, and training them in practical skills such as chanting protective spells.⁴⁷

The earliest known example of a monk acting as military counselor is perhaps Fotucheng 佛圖澄 (232–348).⁴⁸ Four centuries later, the great *Avatamsaka* master Fazang 法藏 (643–712) helped the Great Zhou ruler Wu Zhao 武曌 to quell the rebellious Khitan army by frightening them with images of the Buddhist deity Avalokiteśvara that he conjured on the battlefield. It is not only official histories, stories, and legends, but texts on military strategy and weaponry that attest to the critical role Buddhist monks played in this sphere.⁴⁹

Second, Buddhist monks led armies and fought as warriors. In medieval China, Buddhist monks armed themselves for different purposes. On many occasions they did so to fight rebels and foreign invaders that threatened to shatter the empire and jeopardized the Buddhist dharma patronized by the throne. In other instances, radical clerics took up weapons against secular power and the "orthodox" Buddhism it supported. Histories, both private and official, frequently describe monk-soldiers' participation in various peasant uprisings⁵⁰ and campaigns against foreign invaders.⁵¹

Among the Buddhist clerics famous for their military leadership are the Shaolin monks who served Li Shimin, fighting against and defeating one of his fiercest rivals. Recognizing their contribution, the second emperor of the Tang bestowed upon the leader of these monks an eminent military title.⁵² Huaiyi 懷義 (d. 694), one of female emperor Wu Zhao's (r. 690–705) alleged lovers, assumed a military position of real power when he was appointed adjunct commander-in-chief of a circuit in 693, when the Eastern Turks once again encroached on the borders. Though the Turks abandoned their campaign and Huaiyi seems thus not to have had an opportunity to demonstrate his military prowess, we can assume that Wu Zhao, ever tactful and tactical with crucial appointments, would not have placed a figure lacking martial talent in such a key position.⁵³ Another monk who achieved a high-ranking position was Daoping 道平 (?–758+), who reputedly rescued the Tang rulers from the threat of the devastating rebellion by An Lushan 安祿山 (703–757).⁵⁴

These are but three of the numerous Buddhist monks whose military expertise served the monastic and secular worlds in medieval China. Though we would not want to exaggerate the importance of these monastic participants in military history,⁵⁵ monastic warfare was by no means insignificant in medieval China. By directly engaging in violent conflict, the *saṃgha* opened up a unique sphere in which to negotiate with, and extend its role in, the secular world.

A third category belongs to temples and sites associated with traditions of martial accomplishment. While the Shaolin Temple's connection to the celebrated Bodhidharma (fl. fifth century) is the stuff of legend,⁵⁶ the Shaolin martial tradition can be traced back to Sengchou 僧稠 (480–560), whose reputation as a meditation master matched that of his more renowned predecessor.⁵⁷ Scholars have highlighted the considerable degree to which certain Buddhist ideas, practices, and symbols informed the evolution of Chinese martial arts.

The Buddhist deity Jinnaluo 緊那羅 (Skt. Kimnara), for instance, seems to have played a significant role in justifying Shaolin monks' involvement in martial practice. The eminence that the staff possesses in the Shaolin martial tradition is related to the symbolic importance assigned to another object in Buddhist tradition—the scepter (Skt. *khakkhara*).⁵⁸

Of course, Shaolin temple was not the only holy place where the martial arts were practiced and fostered. Other Buddhist sacred sites with connections to martial training in medieval China included Mt. Emei 峨眉 in Sichuan, Mt. Wutai 五臺 in Shanxi, and Southern Henan's Mt. Funiu 伏牛, not far from Shaolin.⁵⁹

Fourth, though less obvious in its connection to violence, espionage often-times led to bloodshed. As spies, monastics enjoyed a number of advantages. These included their local and dynasty-wide networks and their reputation as “saintly” figures whose outsider status allowed them to serve as mediators among conflicting parties.⁶⁰ With roots in the Six Dynasties period (220–589), the Buddhist monk-spy has a long history in medieval China.⁶¹ A celebrated example of monastic espionage is provided by the two monk-spies who helped the Northern Song (960–1127) army to cross the Yangzi River and annex the Southern Tang kingdom (937–976).⁶²

Espionage also existed between rival Buddhist groups. The *Platform Sutra*, arguably the Bible of Chan Buddhism, describes a Northern Chan monk asked to spy on the rival group. Curiously, this act of deceit occasioned not condemnation but the monk's enlightenment.⁶³ Complex transnational espionage also took place. Though likely the stuff of legend, the account of the Korean Hwaōm patriarch Ŭisang 義湘 (625–702) hastening back to Silla to caution his compatriots about an imminent invasion from Tang China suggests the important role clerics played in this field.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

The sources on the case of this Buddhist monk, so precariously situated at the nexus of faith, military force, and political power, unanimously attest to Faya's closeness to Gaozu. Though these sources fail to divulge the precise nature of the relationship between monk and monarch, it is abundantly clear that the monk secured imperial favor largely through military service. Faya's case emphatically points to the degree to which the Buddhist community in medieval China was implicated in violent martial activities. At loggerheads with the scriptural ban on violence, the saṃgha's exposure to warfare and willingness to resort to violence manifest an enduring tension that Buddhist monastics vainly sought to deny, conceal, or overcome. The social and political maelstrom in which these Buddhist texts were created and promulgated dictates that modern scholars cannot blithely look through the prism of the precepts so amply postulated in various *vinaya* texts to grasp the essential nature of East Asian Bud-

dharma. These precepts might better be understood as idealized behavioral prescriptions that were often out of keeping or at odds with the shifting and complicated circumstances under which the saṃgha grew and transformed.

There were also constant tensions between saṃgha and state in medieval China, fault lines even deeper and more intrinsic than those between monks’ participation in warfare and Buddhist precepts against violence. The delicate nature of this relationship determined that monastic leaders had to “purchase” the saṃgha’s autonomy and independence by, paradoxically, serving the interest of secular rulers. To this end, monks not only offered their expertise in ritual, spiritual, and scholarly matters to enhance the political legitimacy of the state, but also provided military stratagems and martial skills. The saṃgha could not find scriptural support for its participation in military undertakings; the primary justification came from the state and its interests. Paradoxically, involvement in warfare sometimes enhanced the prestige of the saṃgha: as Meir Shahar astutely puts it, “the monks’ violation of the Buddhist prohibition against violence was the source of their monastery’s prosperity under the glorious Tang dynasty.”⁶⁵

This is the paradox that confronted Buddhist monks in medieval China: while the Dharma proscribed violence, the harsh “rules of survival” in medieval China necessarily dictated martial action. While in some instances—like the Mayi and Shaolin monks—the violence was tacitly condoned; in others, like the cases of Faya and Huaiyi, martial monks were roundly condemned.

In examining Faya’s topsy-turvy career, we discover a revealing case of how political fluctuations and oscillating standards of orthodoxy were applied arbitrarily to judging the Buddhist monk’s involvement in violence. Faya’s effort to render service to the Tang government by recruiting monks for the battlefield aroused strong opposition and criticism from Buddhist “fundamentalists” like Zhishi and *vinaya* master Daoxuan. One obvious reason for their objections was, of course, Buddhism’s precepts against killing and violence. A less evident but additional underlying fear may have been the sense that yoking the fate of the saṃgha so unreservedly to the security of the state, the monastic community risked being placed under the complete dominion of secular law, deprived of its autonomy.

Faya, along with the fortune and misfortune he encountered during the final decadent years of the Sui and the first decade of the fledgling Tang dynasty, presents an excellent case of how medieval Chinese Buddhist monks (and nuns) were placed under the general rubric *yaoseng/yaoni* 妖僧/妖尼 (“evil monks/nuns”), or *eseng/leni* 惡僧/惡尼 (“villainous monks/nuns”). In his letter to Faya, Zhishi compared Faya with Sunakssatra and Devadatta, two notorious Indian “evil monks.” In contrast to their counterparts in India, portrayed as ambitious and misguided individuals whose misdeeds threatened to divide and destroy the saṃgha from within, “evil monks” in medieval China (Faya, Huaiyi, Huifan, just to name a few) kept ties with the secular world. Their success and

failure, their fame and notoriety, in both the secular and Dharma worlds were largely determined by the complex nature and unpredictable results of their secular bonds. The Faya case reminds historians of Chinese Buddhism that the study of saṃgha-state interactions in medieval China should not be confined to the connections that rulers fostered with “eminent monks.” Rather, orbits of the lives of so-called evil monks often amply documented in official/court sources due to their impact on the secular world may prove unexpectedly revealing if one patiently uncovers and sifts through the traces.

Most of these “evil monks” were political underdogs. Their ossified image as “villains” in the official historiography leads people to assume that they represented a handful of “unruly,” “erratic,” bad eggs in opposition to the mainstream saṃgha; and from this historians tend to infer that the “heterodox” practices, the bad behavior, of these monks—“forbidden” actions carried out without the sanction of the mainstream Buddhist community—went against fundamental doctrines, principles, and values stipulated in the vinayas. This assumption is far from the truth. First and foremost, the mainstream saṃgha was almost never aloof from secular power. As the well-being of the monastic community was closely bound to their problematic relationship with the state, negotiation with secular power was always at the forefront of saṃgha’s agenda.

Second, monks condemned as “evil” were labeled as such largely because their ties with the state were disastrously severed. Before this rift (and their subsequent vilification), these selfsame monks were often key players in the mainstream saṃgha, pivotal agents in negotiations with the state. Antonino Forte has convincingly argued that the chief members serving on the committee led by “evil monk” Huaiyi—a group responsible for compiling and spreading the cornerstone of female sovereign Wu Zhao’s ideological justification for female rule, the commentary on the *Dayun jing* 大雲經 (Sutra of the Great Cloud)—were learned and important scholar-monks within the mainstream Buddhist establishment.⁶⁶ Huifan, a contemporary of Huaiyi, serves as another example: A key player situated at the nexus of overlapping political and religious networks, Huifan advised Wu Zhao’s ambitious daughter, Princess Taiping 太平 (?–713), until she fell to her nephew and rival, Emperor Xuanzong, in 713.⁶⁷ Compared to Huaiyi and Huifan, evidence on Faya is scarce, presenting a challenge to ascertaining Faya’s personality and the true nature of his relationship with the saṃgha. Though Daoxuan’s biased representations disparage Faya, they still offer a glimpse into the political and military power the controversial monk wielded. It is unlikely that prior to his disgrace, the mainstream saṃgha shunned a monk of Faya’s stature as a “traitor.”

Last, these “evil monks” were not simply notorious apostates whose egregious behavior was thwarted by the mainstream saṃgha. As this chapter has made manifest, more often than not a veritable canyon existed between the ideal monastic behavior prescribed in the vinaya and the actual conduct of the saṃgha.⁶⁸

NOTES

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1. A groundbreaking work on this issue is Paul Demiéville’s “Le bouddhisme et la guerre.” Building on Demiéville’s work, Lambert Schmithausen has suggested four main categories into which legitimized Buddhist warfare would fit; see his “Buddhismus und Glaubenskriege,” 63–92. Starting with Michael Zimmermann’s *Buddhism and Violence* (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2006), the scholarly world has witnessed a surge of enthusiasm for the studies of monastic warfare in different Buddhist traditions. See also Adolphson, *The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha*; Jerryson and Juergensmeyer, *Buddhist Warfare*; Jerryson, *Buddhist Fury*; and most recently, Tikhonov and Brekke, *Violent Buddhism*.

2. *Sifen lü* 四分律, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (100 vols., edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, et al., Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932; hereafter *T*), 22.1428: 671b2–3. Cf. *Sifen sengjie ben* 四分僧戒本, *T*, 22.1430: 1027a21–25.

3. Stuart Young (private communication: March 19, 2013) has suggested to me that here *dao* 道 (of *daochang*) probably refers to the end (enlightenment), rather than the means (practice).

4. *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經, *T*, 12.374: 384b7–11. Cf. *T*, 12.375: 624a11–b3.

5. Known as *Sifen lü* in China (*sabun yul* and *shibun ritsu* in Korea and Japan, respectively), this vinaya tradition has generally been taken to be an extension of the Dharmaguptaka vinaya tradition in South and Central Asia.

6. Qiaoyong 翹勇. There are scholars who argue for a subtle distinction between *xiaoyong* 驍勇 and *qiaoyong* 翹勇 (the latter of which is mostly found in Chinese Buddhist translations), with an emphasis on physical and mental strength, respectively. See Zhu Huixian and Gai Ruixue, “‘Xiaoyong’ yu ‘qiaoyong’ bianxi,” 1–3.

7. Daoxuan’s biography for Zhishi, which reports his death in 638 at the age of thirty-eight *sui*, dates Zhishi’s birth and death as 604 and 638, respectively.

8. *Ji gujin fadao lunheng*, *T*, 52.2104: 3.383a14–19.

9. This line (獫狁孔熾) was taken from the verse “Liuyue” 六月 in *Shijing* 詩經 (Poetry). Xianyun, meaning “northern barbarians,” here refers to Tujue 突厥 (Turks), as verified by Zhishi’s other biographer, Yuan dynasty monk Tan’e 曇噩 (1285–1373), who explicitly records that the Turks invaded and generated panic around the capital. See *Xinxiu kafen liuxue seng zhuan* 新修科分六學僧傳, *Wanzi xuzang jing* 卮字續藏經 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1968–1970; hereafter *X*), no. 1522, 77: 16.206c11–15. See also *Shishi jigu lue* 釋氏稽古略, which states that the northern barbarians known as the Xianyun during the Zhou were called Tujue during the Sui and Tang (*T*, 49.2037: 1.746c2–3).

10. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, *T*, 50.2060: 24.634c26–635a3.

11. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, *T*, 50.2060: 24.635a10–14.

12. *Ibid.*, 635a14–23.

13. Du Zhenglun’s role is also verified in a biography Daoxuan wrote for another “eminent monk.” See *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, *T*, 50.2060: 13.526c9–11. Du Zhenglun maintained constant ties with Tang Buddhism, represented most prominently in the funeral epitaph he wrote for the fourth Chan patriarch Daoxin 道信 (580–651). See *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 (anonymously compiled between 774 and 781), *T*, 51.2075: 182a10. Though this epitaph has since passed into oblivion, it was still extant when Enchin 圓珍 (814–891) arrived in China

at the middle of the ninth century, procured a copy of the epitaph, and brought it back to Japan. See *Enchin daishi shōrai mokuroku* 智證大師請來目錄, in which Enchin lists two texts that look like separate versions (or copies) of the epitaph: “Xin chanshi beiwen” 信禪師碑文, “Du Zhenglun song Shuangfeng Xin chanshi beiwen” 杜正倫送雙峰山信禪師碑文; cf. *Nihon biku Enchin Nittō guhō mokuroku* 日本比丘圓珍入唐求法目錄, T, 55.2172: 1101a19, where only the second version/copy is mentioned. For Du Zhenglun’s ties to his contemporary Buddhist world, Yamazaki Hiroshi’s 山崎宏 article, though dated, is still useful. See Yamazaki, “Shūtō no meishin Tō Seirin to bukkō,” 87–100.

14. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T, 50.2060: 24.635a23–25.

15. *Ibid.*, 635b6–14.

16. *Ibid.*, 635b14–18.

17. *Ibid.*, 634c26.

18. For Fachang, see Chen, *Monks and Monarchs*, 199–200.

19. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T, 50.2060: 24.634c11–636a24; cf. *Ji gujin fodao lunheng*, T, 52.2104: 3.382c17–383a27; *Xinxiu kafen liuxue seng zhuan*, X, 77.1522: 16.206c2–207b10.

20. *Ji gujin fodao lunheng*, T, 52.2104: 3.383a1516: “Therefore [it was decreed that] one thousand brave monks be selected to enter the army. There was a monk called Faya, who personally acted as the head of enrolling [monk-soldiers].”

21. See Zhishi’s letter to Du Zhenglun, in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T, 50.2060: 24.635b2–3, and *Xinxiu kafen liuxue seng zhuan*, X, 77.1522: 16.207a10–11.

22. These two lines are from a verse from *Shijing*, as indicated in note 9.

23. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T, 50.2060: 19.583b16–19. Daoxuan continues by reporting that thanks to his prestige, Zhiman’s temple was exempted from the screening required by this imperial edict.

24. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T, 50.2060: 24.641a24–25.

25. Li Jiping and Li Xihou, *Da Tang chuanyue qiju zhu*, 1.6.

26. *Liang shu* 梁書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 15.206. For Shengshansi, see Chen, “The Statues and Monks of Shengshan Monastery,” 111–160. For more on Li Hanzhi, see Sun Guangxian 孫光宪 (900?–968), *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言, in *Jingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983–1986; hereafter SKQS), 1036: 100a3–5, which is quoted in *Liang shu*, 15.206.

27. *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 57.2289. Also see *Cefu yuangui* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 333.3928b, 334.3949a; *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 88.3739; *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 193.6062.

28. *Zizhi tongjian*, 193.6062.

29. *Cefu yuangui*, 333.3928b. On another occasion, Wang Qinruo leaves this undated: see *Cefu yuangui*, 334.3949a. *Xin Tangshu*, 88 does not date this event either.

30. The above summary of Pei Ji’s life is made on the basis of his two official biographies in *Jiu Tangshu* (57.2285–2289) and *Xin Tangshu* (88.3736–3739).

31. This general is homonymous with the famous Ming dynasty eunuch-general Zheng He 鄭和 (1371–1433), also known as Ma Sanbao.

32. *Cefu yuangui*, 128.1531b. This passage describes Ma Sanbao’s reward for his role in exposing Faya’s “conspiracy” as a case of “Displaying the Principle of Issuing Rewards” (*mingshang* 明賞) in the section “Emperors and Kings” (*Diwang bu* 帝王部). The *Cefu yuangui* mentions Ma Sanbao five additional times. The first appears in the same section of “Emperors and Kings” (*Cefu yuangui*, 133.1602a) as an example of “Rewarding one’s merits” (*baogong* 褒

功). The other four are found in the *Cefu yuangui*’s Section of Generals and Marshals (*Ji-angshuai bu* 將帥部), respectively exemplifying: his “effort to assist in founding a new dynasty” (*zuoming* 佐命, in 345.4090b); his “performance of meritorious service” (*ligong* 立功, 357.4234b); his “reward for exceptional contributions” (*baoyi* 褒異, 384.4566b); and for “defeating the enemy when outnumbered” (*yishao jiduo* 以少擊多, 419.4996b).

33. Further information—a biographical note—on Ma Sanbao appears at the beginning of the princess’s biography (*Jiu Tangshu*, 58.2316). The following review of his life is constructed primarily based on these two sources in the *Jiu Tangshu*, with references to the *Xin Tangshu* biography for Ma (*Xin Tangshu*, 88.3747), that for Princess Pingyang (*Xin Tangshu*, 83.3642) and a much later source *Xu Tongzhi* 續通志 (i.e., *Qinding Xu Tongzhi* 欽定續通志) (not completed until 1785, under the joint editorship of Ji Huang 嵇璜 [1711–1794] and Liu Yong 劉墉 [1719–1805]), which seems to have been closely based on *Xin Tangshu*’s biography of Ma Sanbao. Also see *Cefu yuangui* and *Zizhi tongjian* (184.5757–5758).

34. This characterization is not found in his *Jiu Tangshu* biography, but in his *Xin Tangshu* biography. One passage in the *Cefu yuangui* (357.4234b) notes that he was good at taming falcons and hounds.

35. The *Xin Tangshu* (83.8049, in Princess Pingyang’s biography) identifies him as a “famous rebel” (*mingzei* 名賊) or simply a rebel (*zei* 賊) (88.3747, in Ma Sanbao’s biography); the *Xu Tongzhi* (Taibei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guang, 1987), 203.4486a, follows the latter. The *Cefu yuangui* (345.4090b), calls He Panren a “rebel leader” (*zeishuai* 賊帥). Sima Guang (*Zizhi tongjian* 184.5757), on the other hand, appears closer to the authors of the *Jiu Tangshu*, identifying He Panren as a “Barbarian merchant from the Western Regions” (i.e., South or Central Asia): *Xiyu shanghu* 西域商胡.

36. This self-proclaimed title of He Panren is confirmed in the *Xin Tangshu* (83.3642; in the biography of Pingyang), though on another occasion (*Xin Tangshu*, 88.3747; in the biography of Ma Sanbao), this source gives the title to Ma Sanbao, meaning that he acted as the superintendent-in-chief of the princess’ household. Cf. *Xu Tongzhi*, 203.4486a; *Cefu yuangui*, 345.4090b.

37. The *Zizhi tongjian* (184.5757) identifies Li Zhongwen as an uncle of Li Mi 李密 (582–619) and Qiu Shili as a son of Qiu He 丘和 (552–637), an eminent Sui official who was then serving as the prefect of Jiaozhi 交趾 (in present-day Vietnam). Qiu He later switched his allegiance to the Tang.

38. This refers to Wei Wensheng 衛文昇 (?–617), who was ordered in 613 to assist Yang You 楊侑 (605–619), a son of Sui Yangdi and the future puppet emperor set up by Li Yuan, in performing his duty as the regent of Chang’an. See *Zizhi tongjian*, 182.5668. Given Yang You’s youth at the time (he was then only nine *sui*), the Chang’an regency must have actually been exercised by Wei Wensheng. As a matter of fact, Wei Wensheng later assumed the function both in reality and in name. See *Jiu Tangshu*, 1.2–3, in which Wei Wensheng is explicitly identified as the Regent of the Capital (*Jingshi liushou* 京師留守); cf. *Xin Tangshu*, 1.5; *Cefu yuangui*, 19.206a; *Zizhi tongjian*, 184.5762.

39. *Xin Tangshu*, 88.3747. *Cefu yuangui*, 345.4090b gives the title as “Da jianmen shuai” 大監門率, an obvious error for “Taizi jianmen shuai” 太子監門率.

40. Though reported in the *Jiu Tangshu*, but not the *Xin Tangshu*, this appointment is confirmed in the *Cefu yuangui* (384.4566b). But in another place of the same text (*Cefu yuangui*, 345.4090b), the position is recorded as “General-in-chief of the Left Courageous Guard” (*Zuo xiaowei da jiangjun* 左驍衛大將軍). The “General-in-chief of the Left Courageous Guard” could not have been the position Ma Sanbao was appointed to as a result of his

merit in quelling the Xues, given that he was not able to gain the title of general-in-chief until the beginning of the Zhenguan era (627–649).

41. This most likely is an error for Weizhou 渭州 (in present-day Gansu province). *Cefu yuangui*, 419.4996b. This feat is not reported in any other sources known to me.

42. The *Xin Tangshu* (88.3747) also reports that he was promoted to the rank of duke, which must have been the subprefectural duke of Xinxing, given his previously bestowed title of “sub-prefectural marquis or baron of Xinxing.”

43. *Jiu Tangshu*, 2.31, 57.2295; cf. *Xin Tangshu*, 88.3740.

44. The text originally has *zuo lingjun da jiangjun* 左領軍大將軍, which probably refers to *zuo lingjun wei da jiangjun* 左領軍衛大將軍 (General-in-Chief of the Left Metropolitan Guard). See *Xin Tangshu*, 191.5512–5525, where a full list of these “meritorious officials” is found, including Ma Sanbao’s name (191.5523), but without the date of their anointment, which is recorded in *Jiu Tangshu*, 12.327. Cf. *Cefu yuangui*, 133.1608b–1609a, where a partial list of the “meritorious officials” and the date of their anointment are recorded; and *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1955) 45.807, where a similarly incomplete list is included.

45. *Zizhi tongjian*, 193.6064.

46. Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*, 136–142.

47. Wright, “Fo Tu-cheng,” 312–371.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Tso Sze-bong, “Seng shi suo zai,” 325–357, and *Zhongguo shamen*.

50. Ch’en, “Some Factors Responsible for the Anti-Buddhist Persecution under the Pei-ch’ao,” 261–273; Kegasawa Yasunori, “Zui-matsu Mirokukyō no ran o meguru ikkōsatsu,” 15–32; Tsukamoto Zenyū, “Hokugi no bukkō hi,” 1–38. Zürcher, “Prince Moonlight,” 1–75.

51. Cheng Dali and He Weiqi, “Shaolin sengbing kangwo shiji kao,” 20–22; Cheng Dali and Zhang Zhuo, “Kangwo sengbing: Shaolinsi seng? Shaolin paiseng,” 77–80.

52. Shahrar, “Epigraphy, Buddhist Historiography, and Fighting Monks,” 15–36.

53. Broy, “Martial Monks in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” 45–89; Chen, “The Statues and Monks of Shengshan Monastery,” 111–160.

54. *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, T, 49.2035: 40.375c21–25.

55. Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare*.

56. Tang Hao, “Jiu Zhongguo tiyushi shang fuhui de Damo,” and Faure, “Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm,” 187–198.

57. Ma Aimin, “Lun Woguo wushu shi shang de Chou chanshi yu Songshan Shaolinsi,” 90–94, “Woguo lishi shang de siyuan shangwu huodong xintan,” 758–760; “Yexia gaoseng dui Shaolinsi he Shaolinsi wushu de gongxian yu yingxiang,” 52–55; “Beichao Chou chanshi de wugong he Yexia siyuan wuseng de xiwu huodong,” 23–30, and “Shaolin wushu de yuanqi ji zhuming wuseng Chou chanshi younian xiwu bianhuo,” 18–21; Shen Huaisong, “Shaolin wushu qiyuan kaobian,” 88–90.

58. Shahrar, “Ming-Period Evidence of Shaolin Martial Practice,” 359–413.

59. Kuang Wennan, “Shaolin xiwu de faduan ji zaoqi Daojiao wushu,” 9–11; Lee, “The Real Fists of Fury,” 48–53; Ma Mingda, “Wutaishan de sengbing yu wuyi,” 29–31; and Quanzhou Nan Shaolinsi yanjiuhui, *Quanzhou Nan Shaolinsi yanjiu*.

60. See Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*.

61. Fujiyoshi Masumi, “Rikuchō Bukkyō kyōdan no ichisokumen,” 475–506, and Flesel, “The State-run Espionage System,” 115–116.

62. Chen Baozhen, “Nantang sanzhu yu fojiao xinyang,” 245–285; Brose, “Credulous Kings and Immoral Monks,” 73–98; and Xu Xinxun, “Nantang sandi yu fojiao.”
63. Yamposky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 163–164.
64. Buswell, “Introduction,” 8.
65. Shahar, “The Shaolin Monastery,” 35.
66. Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China*, 1976 and 2005.
67. Chen, “Shengshan Monastery.” Huifan is the subject of a monograph that I am currently completing.
68. Hao Chunwen has argued, among other things, that many Dunhuang monks did not actually live in monasteries. See Hao, *Tang houqi Wudai Songchu Dunhuang sengni de shehui shenghuo*.

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MARTIAL MONKS WITHOUT BORDERS

Was Sinseong a Traitor or Did He Open the Gate to a Pan-Asian Buddhist Realm?

KELLY CARLTON

Building upon Chen Jinhua's recent series of essays that deftly strip away facile labels of "villainy" and "evil" from controversial Buddhist monks in medieval China, this chapter endeavors to examine the understudied Goguryean 高麗 (also 高句麗; trad. 37 BCE–668 CE) monk-general Sinseong 信誠 (dates unknown), who opened the gates of the state's besieged capital Pyongyang 平壤 to collaborative Tang (618–690, 705–907)–Sillan 新羅 (trad. 57 BCE–935 CE) forces in 668.¹ Contrary to Faya 法雅 (?–629), who was ousted for enlisting monks as soldiers only after a shift in political opinion, Sinseong avoided ostracism in all but one Joseon 朝鮮 (1392–1910) Buddhist source. Upon what grounds were this wily monk's precept-flouting, treasonous actions condoned in Chinese and even Korean court histories? Did he merely harness political favor, or were religious notions of compassion and pan-Asian Buddhist universalism at play? Sinseong's curious, sparsely chronicled career further highlights three facets of behaving badly in medieval China: (1) the influence of political expediency in verdicts of morality; (2) state-affiliated Buddhist institutions' rationalization of doctrinally proscribed violence; and (3) the potency of supranational religio-political convictions.

PERSPECTIVES FROM ACROSS EAST ASIA: SINSEONG CONDONED AND CONDEMNED

The rapidly shifting religio-political terrain of mid- to late-seventh century Korea compelled a Buddhist monk like Sinseong to tread with caution. The devolution of the Goguryean power structure following the death of Grand Minister Plenipotentiary (*Dae mangniji* 大莫離支) and de facto leader Yeon Gaesomun 淵蓋蘇文 (603–666), fashioned a particularly conducive environment

for bad behavior. A factional struggle coalesced around Gaesomun's three sons: Yeon Namsaeng 淵男生 (634–679), the eldest and chosen successor, pled for Tang assistance against his mutinous brothers, Namgeon 淵男建 (dates unknown) and Namsan 淵男産 (639–701). Emperor Tang Gaozong 唐高宗 (r. 649–683) eagerly agreed to Namsaeng's request, keen to succeed where his father, Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626–649), had failed.² The subsequent Tang-Silla alliance against Goguryeo and its ally, Baekje 百濟 (trad. 18 BCE–660 CE), transformed an internal conflict into a wider East Asian affair.³ Nevertheless, the information surrounding Sinseong within the resultant assemblage of Chinese, Korean, and Buddhist records is limited to the fall of Pyongyang.⁴ Further contributing to the curiousness of these records is their lack of moral critique (save for the one significantly later Joseon Buddhist condemnation). Reconstructing an understanding of Sinseong's bad behavior as a general-monk and a traitor requires piecing together the tantalizing additions, omissions, or divergences subtly distinguishing each source and teasing out the purposes served by their differing appraisals.⁵

The Chinese Perspective: Sinseong in Later Jin, Northern and Southern Song Court Histories

Chinese histories are rife with disapproval of other badly behaving monks: the Tang court escapades of Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義 (d. 695) were rigorously disavowed by Confucian literati after the death of his protective patron, China's only female emperor Wu Zhao 武曌 (r. 690–705); and Huifan 惠范 (also 慧范; d. 713) similarly earned a seat at the table of infamy for his cooperation in Princess Taiping 太平's (d. 713) attempted coup against Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (r. 712–756).⁶ In contrast, Sinseong's contentious treason is recast and polished as an honorable deed. He is welcomed into the Tang as a hero—a champion of Gaozong's righteous offensive to reestablish Chinese suzerainty over the prized northern Korean peninsula.⁷ At least to current knowledge, the first Chinese source to document Sinseong's pivotal role is the *Old Tang History* (*Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書), compiled under the direction of Liu Xu 劉昫 (887–946) in the Later Jin (936–946). Liu Xu describes how gifted Tang generals Li Ji 李勣 (594–669), Xue Rengui 薛仁貴 (614–683), and Tiele 鐵勒 chief Qibi Heli 契苾何力 (d. 677) swept through the Goguryean countryside to surround Pyongyang by late 668.⁸ At this juncture, Sinseong, entrusted with the defense of the capital, contacted Li Ji to arrange a collusive agreement:

King Bojang [高藏 (r. 642–668)]⁹ and [Yeon] Namgeon dispatched Elder Brother of State,¹⁰ [Yeon] Namsan, to lead a ninety-eight man [party]. Holding a silk banner, [they] exited [the city] to surrender and requested an audience [with Li Ji]. Li Ji received them in accordance with ritual

propriety. Namgeon nevertheless closed the gate and stubbornly defended [the city]. During the ninth month of the first year of the Zongzhang reign era,¹¹ Li Ji once again shifted camp south of the city of Pyongyang. Namgeon repeatedly sent soldiers to fight, [but] all were defeated. Buddhist monk Sinseong, the troop unit supervisor beneath Namgeon, secretly dispatched a person to the center [i.e., to General Li Ji's tent] to promise that the city gates would be opened by means of a treachery from within. Five days later, Sinseong opened the gate as planned. Li Ji accompanied [his] soldiers inside. [The Tang soldiers] climbed the city walls and beat the drums loudly; [they] burned the gate tower, [and] flames rose in the four corners [of the city]. Namgeon, being hard-pressed, quickly stabbed himself, [but he] did not die. In the tenth month, Pyongyang was sacked. [The Tang troops] captured Bojang, Namgeon, and other [prisoners of war].

In the twelfth month, the troops arrived at the capital city [of the Tang, Chang'an] and ceremonially presented the prisoners of war at Hanyuan Palace.¹² [Gaozong] decreed that since Bojang's political affairs were not of his own accord¹³ he was to be bestowed with the position of Grand Executive Attendant of the Ministry of Works.¹⁴ Namsan, being the first to surrender, was conferred the position of Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments.¹⁵ Namgeon was exiled to Qianzhou.¹⁶ Because Namsaeng guided [the Tang troops] with merit,¹⁷ he was bestowed with the position of Great General of the Right Guard. He was invested as the Duke of Bian and given a special promotion in accordance with [his involvement in] the event.¹⁸

The *Old Tang History* provides three important pieces of information on Sinseong: (1) he was the troop unit supervisor underneath Namgeon's command; (2) he sent a messenger to arrange the collusive agreement with General Li Ji; and (3) he subsequently opened the city gates in fulfillment of this previous arrangement.

Following the *Old Tang History*, Wang Qinruo's 王欽若 (962–1025) *Models from the Archives* (*Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜), commissioned in 1005 by Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 998–1022) of the Northern Song (960–1127), offers a few intriguing variations.¹⁹ Of particular interest, Wang Qinruo details a handsome reward Sinseong received upon his presentation to the Tang court: the nominal title of Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon (*yingqing guanglu dafu* 銀青光祿大夫), bestowed for being among the first to surrender.²⁰ Regarding this critical piece of information, *Models from the Archives* anticipates the second standard history of the Tang, the *New Tang History* (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書), compiled under the supervision of Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) during the Northern Song. Ouyang Xiu

outlines the fate of several other figures: Baekje King Buyeo Yung 扶餘隆; Heonseong 獻誠 (651–692), Namsaeng's son sent to plead for Tang assistance; Qibi Heli; and Li Ji:

In the ninth month, Bojang dispatched Commander-in-chief Namsan to lead one hundred men²¹ to plant a white silk banner [in surrender] and to further request an audience [with Li Ji]. Li Ji received the delegation with proper diplomatic protocol. Namgeon nevertheless stubbornly defended [the city], sending out troops that repeatedly fled in retreat. Buddhist monk-general Sinseong dispatched a spy [to Li Ji's tent] to promise a treachery from within. Five days later, the leaves of the gate were opened. [The Tang] troops entered with raucous noise, setting fire to [the city] gate. Dense flames arose in the four [corners of the city]. Hard-pressed, Namgeon stabbed himself, but to no avail. [The Tang troops] took custody of Bojang, Namgeon, and others. [Goguryeo] was partitioned into five divisions of 176 cities and 690,000 households.²² It was decreed that Li Ji should journey with expediency to present the prisoners of war at Zhaoling.²³ [He] then returned in triumph.

In the twelfth month, Emperor [Gaozong] resided in Hanyuan Palace. [He] summoned Li Ji to present the prisoners of war. Because Bojang was clearly coerced, [he was] pardoned and named the Grand Executive Attendant of the Ministry of Works.²⁴ Namsan became Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments; Namgeon was exiled to Qianzhou. Baekje King Buyeo Yung, [was sent] beyond the passes.²⁵ Heonseong became Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Regalia. Sinseong became the Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon. Yeon Namsaeng became the Great General of the Right Guard; [Qibi] Heli took over the position of Great General of the Left Guard; [and Li] Ji, concurrent [with his existing generalship], became the Grand Preceptor of the Heir Apparent.²⁶ [Xue] Rengui [was given charge of] the Protectorate to Pacify the East.²⁷

With *Models from the Archives* and the *New Tang History*, we see very clearly the bias afforded to Sinseong in Chinese sources. Considering Confucian literati were often didactically caustic toward Buddhist monks in political forays, it would seem Sinseong would be similarly vilified—he certainly subverted a fundamental Confucian tenet of loyalty to one's state. As Gaozong's bestowal of an esteemed nominal title upon Sinseong indicates, however, the monk was treated as an honorary vassal. His actions were thus judged in later histories on the basis of this new allegiance.

Furthering this gracious rebranding of Sinseong, the *New Tang History* likewise lacks a moral critique. This is especially deliberate when considering Sinseong's placement in an even more doctrinally controversial position: a gen-

eral (*da jiang* 大將) in concurrence with his Buddhist ordination (*futu* 浮屠). While this particular general-monk designation is rare, there are many other examples of monks acting as generals across East Asia. For instance, the Buddhist monk Geo Chil-bu 居柒夫 (d. 579) of Silla was promoted to a generalship in 551 in a campaign against Goguryeo.²⁸ Over a century later, in 690, Wu Zhao designated monk Xue Huaiyi as the Great General of the Right Guard (*you wei da jiang jun* 右衛大將軍). He subsequently received an appointment in 694 as an adjunct commander-in-chief of the Tang northern circuit—a position bestowed under the very real threat of an Eastern Turk (Tujue 突厥) invasion, led by the formidable Qaghan Mochuo 默啜.²⁹

Following the *New Tang History*, Sima Guang 司馬光's (1019–1086) *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑) is likewise uncritical of Sinseong. The monk's transgressions against Buddhist precepts, wanton disregard for hallowed martial codes, and neglect of Confucian piety remain untouched. Nor does Sima Guang's rendition elucidate the confusion over Sinseong's varying martial titles; Namgeon is merely described as entrusting military affairs to Sinseong in the midst of the siege:

Namgeon entrusted military affairs to the Buddhist monk, Sinseong. Sinseong secretly dispatched a messenger to call upon Li Ji, requesting [the latter's participation in] a treachery from within. Five days later, Sinseong opened the gate. Li Ji gave soldiers free reign to climb the city walls and to beat the drums loudly. [The Tang troops] burned the city to its four corners.³⁰ Namgeon stabbed himself, but did not die. [The Tang troops] successfully captured him. Goguryeo was completely pacified.³¹

The *Comprehensive Mirror* is only further distinguished by details of Li Ji's procession into Chang'an and the triumphant presentation of prisoners at the imperial ancestral temple:

As Li Ji was about to arrive [in Chang'an], [Tang Gaozong] issued a high decree for Bojang and the other prisoners to be presented at Zhaoling. [Li Ji] organized the troops in formation; [they] sang a song of triumph and entered the capital. The spoils of war were presented at the imperial ancestral temple.³² In the twelfth lunar month, on the day of the 4th heavenly stem and 6th terrestrial branch, [King Bojang] was taken to Hanyuan Hall.³³

Titles and banishments allotted to the prisoners align with those in the *New Tang History*, with one exception: rather than Buyeo Yung, his brother Buyeo Pung 扶餘豐 is banished to Lingnan.³⁴

Two subsequent sources from the Southern Song (1127–1279), Yuan Shu 袁樞's (1131–1205) *Topically Arranged Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*

(*Tongjian jishi benmo* 通鑑紀事本末) and Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 (1254–1323) *General Study of the Literary Remains* (*Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考), are the final Chinese histories to mention Sinseong. Having derived their information from the earlier *Comprehensive Mirror* and *New Tang History*, respectively, Yuan Shu and Ma Duanlin fail to expound upon previous sources.³⁵ Sinseong remains a curious Buddhist monk with a disputed martial role, who—seemingly of his own volition—sought a partnership with the Tang army. To further tease Sinseong from the pages of history, we must turn away from this Sinocentric focus to investigate two promising Korean sources: a Goryeo (918–1392) court history introducing two of Sinseong's coconspirators and a Joseon Buddhist source that brands Sinseong as a villain.

The Korean Perspective: A Neutral Goryeo Court History and a Scathing Buddhist Critique

Compiled by Gim Busik 金富弼 (1075–1151) in 1145 under the unified Korean state of Goryeo, the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記) is the first known Korean compilation to mention Sinseong. Gim Busik, traditionally considered a staunch Confucian, refrains from writing a didactic condemnation of Sinseong's bad behavior. There may be several reasons for this. First, Gim Busik presents the history of Goryeo with a principally Confucian historiographical ethos, excising certain Buddhist and indigenous mythic anecdotes. As Richard McBride II observes, Gim Busik “does not give any more or less treatment to Buddhism than did the compilers of Chinese histories.”³⁶ Nevertheless, Chinese Confucian literati did not hesitate to censure Buddhist excess, and Sinseong—a prime candidate for such criticism—fares well in the Korean dynastic history.

Further evidence may lie in Gim Busik's attempt to obscure religio-political rifts within Goryeo highlighted by the Myocheong Rebellion (1134–1136). This rebellion centered—interestingly enough—around the Buddhist monk Myocheong 妙清 (d. 1135) and his sympathizers, who ensconced themselves within the walls of Pyongyang. Rather than highlight his Buddhist affiliation, Gim Busik toiled to rewrite Myocheong as an outlier entirely disconnected from the unified pulse of Goryeo society.³⁷ Yet again, Gim Busik does not correspondingly erase Sinseong's Buddhist connections, nor does he use Sinseong to caution against the disastrous outcome had the Myocheong Rebellion succeeded.

Similar to preceding Chinese historians, such lack of judgment reveals an underlying political, rather than moral, bias: Goryeo, which (according to Gim Busik) held legitimacy as the heir to Silla's unified Korean kingdom, benefited from Sinseong behaving badly.³⁸ Sinseong's transgressions are thus relegated to the background as he is revealed to be part of a larger, inevitable coup:

Namgeon entrusted military affairs to the Buddhist monk Sinseong.³⁹ Sinseong and the lesser generals, O Sa 烏沙, Yomyo 饒苗, and others secretly dispatched a messenger to call upon Li Ji, requesting [the latter's participation in] a treachery from within. Five days later, Sinseong opened the gate [to the city]. Li Ji gave free reign to his soldiers to climb the city walls, beat the drums, and set fire to the city. Namgeon stabbed himself, but [he] did not die. [Tang troops] captured the king, Namgeon, and others.⁴⁰

The remaining passage is a near verbatim parallel to the *Comprehensive Mirror*.

Mention of O Sa and Yomyo is also included in the fifteenth-century Buddhist text *Study of Joseon Meditation and Doctrine* (*Joseon seon-gyo go* 朝鮮禪教考), written by Bak Yeongseon (Pak Yŏng-sŏn) 朴永善 during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910).⁴¹ While lacking novel information, *Joseon Meditation and Doctrine* is unique as the only source to comment on the morality of Sinseong's actions. In this singular source, Sinseong is condemned as a “villainous” or “false” (*jian* 奸) monk:

After eighteen years, Goguryeo was destroyed due to the entrustment of military affairs to a villainous monk. This, according to the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, happened in the twenty-seventh year, 5th heavenly stem, 5th terrestrial branch of King Bojang's reign. Li Ji surrounded Pyongyang for over a month. Yeon Namgeon nevertheless shut the gate to protect and guard [the city]. The Buddhist monk Sinseong was entrusted with the military affairs. Sinseong and the lesser generals O Sa, Yomyo, and others secretly dispatched a person to call upon Li Ji, requesting [the latter's participation in] a treachery from within. Five days later, Sinseong opened the gates [of the city]. Li Ji gave free reign to his soldiers to climb the city walls and beat the drums loudly. Goguryeo was subsequently destroyed. It is now Pyongan province.⁴²

Such an unmitigated denouncement of Sinseong may be interpreted as a Buddhist moral response to a renegade monk who was entirely unrepresentative of the larger institution. However, Bak Yeongseon praises other doctrinally questionable monks in his work: the Goguryean monk-spies Dorim 道琳 and Deokjang 德昌, sent to infiltrate Baekje and Silla, respectively; and the martyr Dochim 道琛, who rallied troops in defense of fallen Baekje.⁴³ The key difference is that these monks remained loyal to their patron kingdoms. Thus, branding Sinseong as a monk of villainy served an important political function: distancing an increasingly marginalized Joseon Buddhist establishment from examples of seditious monk-subjects.

Buddhism had enjoyed considerable favor during the preceding Goryeo period as the cradle of the dynasty's religio-political legitimacy.⁴⁴ During the

subsequent Joseon, however, the court adopted Song China neo-Confucian rhetoric to confiscate the wealth and curb the influence of the Buddhist institution.⁴⁵ Neo-Confucianists revised the Myocheong narrative to pit Busik—the upright Confucian scholar-general who quelled the rebellion—against Myocheong’s immoral Buddhist schemes. Neo-Confucian scholar Ha Ryun 河崙 (1347–1416) considered Pyongyang the site of Confucianism’s contest against such anarchy, while Choe Bu 崔溥 (1454–1504) blamed the specious Buddhist doctrine for the eventual downfall of Goryeo.⁴⁶ This prompted Buddhist apologetics such as Gihwa 己和’s (1376–1433) *Treatise on Manifesting Rightness* (*Hyeonjeong non* 顯正論), which argues that monks show the utmost loyalty, never failing to complete their daily prayers and rituals in protection of the state.⁴⁷ In this historical witch hunt, Sinseong would have only further undermined the Buddhist institution’s defense. Curiously, Buddhism as a nation-protecting religion was the very same notion that influenced Namgeon to entrust military affairs to Sinseong in the defense of Pyongyang.

SINSEONG, THE MARTIAL MONK OF VILLAINY OR COMPASSION?

Sinseong’s position as second-in-command under Yeon Namgeon—as well as the connections he cultivated with coconspirators Yomyo and O Sa—indicates a monk who enjoyed intimate access to the Goguryean court and military. Despite Sinseong’s ingratiation with the highest ranks of Goguryean leadership, there is relatively little evidence of a sustained, large-scale Buddhist following in Goguryeo during his time.⁴⁸ Beginning with King Yeongnyu 榮留’s (r. 618–642) request for Daoist texts from the Tang in 624, the Goguryean elite progressively disregarded Buddhism in favor of Daoism. Daoism’s influence over court continued to grow throughout the next several decades, especially during the de facto rule of Yeon Gaesomun.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Sinseong’s presence attests that the almost three hundred years of Buddhist development in Goguryeo had at least ingrained a sense of monks’ worth to those in power. Sinseong was part of a Buddhist tradition that, while losing traction to Daoism, still held considerable value during the Tang-Goguryeo conflict as a source of state protection.⁵⁰ His doctrinally contradictory generalship—bestowed on the basis of both his assumed thaumaturgical abilities and his efficacy as a monk-soldier—was rendered permissible in the safeguarding of imperial patronage.

Protecting the State: Sinseong as a Thaumaturgist and a Martial Monk

The supernatural techniques monks were believed to harness for the protection of a kingdom played a significant role in Sinseong’s appointment in the Goguryean army. Monks’ perceived capabilities to perform miraculous cures, drive away supernatural and human enemies, and procure the favor of various Bud-

dhas were particularly attractive to kings and nobility. In the delicate client-state relationship between the Buddhist institution and its patron kingdom, rulers provided monks with economic support and imperial favor in return for the Buddha's protection and good fortune. This concept of 'Nation Protection Buddhism' (Ch. *huguo fojiao*; Kr. *hoguk bulgyo* 護國佛教), popularized during the Chinese Northern Dynasties period (386–581), colored subsequent state-sponsored Buddhist institutions in Korea and Japan.⁵¹

Often, the protective thaumaturgical work of monks involved the recitation of *sūtras* or the invocation of *dhāraṇī* (powerful incantations or talismans).⁵² In Sinseong's case, the apocryphal Chinese texts *Transcendent Wisdom Scripture for Humane Kings* (*Renwang banruoboluomi jing* 仁王般若波羅蜜經) and *Scripture of the Golden Light* (*Jin guangming zuisheng wang jing* 金光明最勝王經)—two of the earliest tantric works widely disseminated throughout Three Kingdoms Korea—may have been part of the Goguryean Buddhist repertoire.⁵³ Sinseong and his fellow monks would have recited these scriptures to accumulate positive karmic resonances for the protection of the king and his state.⁵⁴ In the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, for instance, the Buddha expounds the powers of the Perfection of Wisdom (Skt. *Prajñāpāramitā*; Ch. *banruoboluomi* 般若波羅蜜) to King Prasenajit and other rulers gathered to hear his teachings:⁵⁵

You [as in Prasenajit] and the other [kings] listen well. I will now precisely explain a means to protect [your] kingdom, supposing you accept and maintain the Perfection of Wisdom. At the time [your] kingdom lapses into chaos, [thus facing] destruction by pillaging and burning, [with] thieves and traitors drawing near to rout the kingdom, [you] ought to respectfully request [for the assemblage of] one hundred Buddha images, one hundred bodhisattva images, and one hundred arhat images; [as well as request for] one hundred *bhikṣus* (ordained monks), the great fourfold assembly,⁵⁶ and the sevenfold assembly⁵⁷ to all [gather] together and listen to one hundred *Dharma*-masters expound upon the Perfection of Wisdom. In front of one hundred high seats [upon which] the authoritative teaching⁵⁸ [is expounded], burn one hundred lamps and one hundred [kinds of] incense, and [scatter] one hundred varieties of colorful flowers. In the capacity of providing for the Three Treasures, supply the three garments [of monastic dress]⁵⁹ and miscellaneous things to attend to the needs of the *Dharma*-masters. Moreover, [provide] small foodstuffs for midday meals at the appropriate times.

Great King! Twice daily have this scripture recited and explained. There are one hundred divisions of ghosts and spirits in the center of your country, each of which is comprised of one hundred units. [When] the sounds of this scripture [being recited] are heard, these hordes of ghosts and spirits will [rally to] protect your kingdom.⁶⁰

It is not surprising, though, that there is no direct attestation to Sinseong as a thaumaturgist in the available Chinese sources. Buddhist monks were only mentioned in this capacity when directly employed to help the Chinese state. Fazang 法藏 (643–713)—a contemporary of Sinseong—provides an apt example. When Wu Zhao's Zhou (690–705) dynasty faced the impending invasion of the northeastern Khitan 契丹 army in 697, Fazang employed *dhāraṇī* to beseech Guanyin 觀音, the Great Bodhisattva of Compassion, to descend upon the invaders with her army of lesser deities and frightened them into a hasty retreat.⁶¹ Those outside the Chinese fold also employed *dhāraṇī* for the benefit of their patron kingdoms. Fazang's colleague, Uisang 義湘 (625–702), popularized the *Great Compassion Spell* (*dabei zhou* 大悲咒) in Silla, which by the eighth century was recited daily to protect the kingdom.⁶²

In addition to harnessing preventative incantations, monks were also believed able to ascertain the outcome of battles and to unencumber participants in war from their accumulated negative karma.⁶³ For instance, Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (232–348) gained the patronage of the powerful Shi 石 family of the Later Zhao (319–351) after he imparted upon General Guo Heilüe 郭黑略 the ability to foretell the results of martial engagements.⁶⁴ This notion migrated to Goguryeo with the influx of small Chinese and Xianbei refugee groups from the north, which had readily employed monks as military advisors and technicians in their own kingdoms.⁶⁵ As Buddhism further interacted and melded with indigenous shamanistic practices, Buddhist monks in Goguryeo assumed shamans' traditional roles as mediums with the spirit world, curers of disease, and nation-protectors.⁶⁶ This precedent spread throughout wider Three Kingdoms Korea. As one example, King Munmu 文武王 (r. 661–681) of Silla called upon Myeongnang 明郎, a monk renowned for his studies in phenomenal methods of warfare, to rebuff an impending Tang invasion in 674. The monk advised King Munmu to construct a temple to the Four Deva Kings (later rebuilt as Sacheonwang Monastery 四天王寺) and train troops on its grounds. With a Tang fleet nearing the coast, Myeongnang counseled King Munmu to decorate the temple with silk brocade, fashion a grass image of the five-faced god, and have twelve monks entreat the spirits for protection. A typhoon resultantly destroyed the Tang fleet.⁶⁷

Yet, monks often provided these thaumaturgic services without any formal, permanent ties to the army. A second facet of Sinseong's martial position must then be taken into account: his defense of the state as a ranked Goguryean military official. Pyongyang's resistance was imperative to the survival of Goguryeo; miraculous abilities aside, it is highly improbable Sinseong attained such a critical position of responsibility without any martial awareness. Monks were highly educated individuals with a wide understanding of doctrines. They were consequently employed as martial advisors; Buddhist temples often served to house and train troops. For instance, Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (343–413) and his contemporaries Dao'an 道安 (312–385), Guṇavarman 求那跋摩 (367–431),

and Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (385–433) are known to have been advisors in Chinese military affairs.⁶⁸

Further, there are long traditions of kingdoms employing monk-soldiers in China, Korea, and Japan. In 570, the prince of Qiyang 齊陽, Yuwen Xian 宇文憲 (544–578), under the authority of Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 561–578), paid thousands of monks to fight as soldiers in defense of the Northern Zhou (557–581).⁶⁹ The future Tang Taizong later employed the famed martial monks of Shaolin 少林 against Sui general Wang Shichong 王世充 (d. 621).⁷⁰ This phenomenon can also be observed in Silla. Monks affiliated with the *hwarang* 花郎 warrior youth were expected to “fight bravely in battle, to safeguard not only the state and its ruler but the way of the Buddha as well.”⁷¹ The Five Precepts for Secular Life (*sesok ogye* 世俗五戒) espoused by Sillan monk Wongwang 圓光 bonded Buddhist devotion with Confucian teachings to encourage state loyalty; the *hwarang* were exhorted to remain loyal to one’s sovereign, filial to one’s parents, and fraternal to one’s friends. They were also urged to “fight in battle without retreating” and “to kill only when necessary.”⁷² In Japan, nobility recruited monks to fight in conflicts such as in the Genpei War (1180–1185). As Mikael S. Adolphson illustrates, despite the weight scholarship has placed on stylized depictions of “warrior monks” (*sōhei* 僧兵) fighting in monastic garb, these monks were in fact nearly indistinguishable from other soldiers in both battle attire and use of weapons.⁷³

Sinseong, in his dual role as Buddhist monk and military leader, was certainly not alone in the wider East Asian sphere. Yet, despite the ordinariness of monks’ participation in martial affairs—whether as wonderworkers or as soldiers directly engaged in conflicts—one is left to wonder how the Buddhist institution justified these actions. Indeed, the role of martial Buddhist monks has historically prompted opposition from the larger Buddhist establishment.⁷⁴ Even if the Chinese histories exonerate Sinseong of his sedition, his bad behavior as a martial monk still remains to be assessed on the basis of Buddhist tenets.

Balancing Doctrinal Restrictions with Compassionate Expediency

Although precepts concerning lay followers are at times ambiguous, allowing interpretive room for kings to wage (and laypeople to fight in) wars in defense of the *Dharma*, the various renditions of the Buddhist *vinaya* emphatically prohibit violence from its ordained members.⁷⁵ One of the ten moral precepts (Skt. *śikṣāpada*; Ch. *shi jie* 十戒) taken by novices (Skt. *śrāmaṇera*; Ch. *shami* 沙彌) forbids the killing of living creatures (Skt. *pāṇātipātāveramaṇi*; Ch. *bu sha sheng* 不殺生). Rules within the *prātimokṣa* (*boluotimucha* 波羅提木叉), a set of precepts governing the actions of ordained monks and nuns, outlaw direct involvement in warfare: the third of the Four Defeats (Skt. *pārājikas*; Ch. *si qi*

四棄), those crimes demanding permanent expulsion from the monastic community, states that a monk should not cause harm—directly or indirectly—to other sentient beings. Further, several restrictions on monks visiting battle sites may be found in the list of negative karma-forming actions necessitating penance (Skt. *pāyantika*; Ch. *danduo* 單墮): (1) there must be sufficient cause for a monk to visit troops prepared for battle; (2) the monk may only stay for two or three nights; and (3) the monk must not witness the troops in battle-array.⁷⁶ These prohibitory clauses led the celebrated monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) to resolutely decline participation in Taizong’s campaign against Goguryeo.⁷⁷

In what way, then, did Sinseong validate his position in the military? He may have been doctrinally justified in protecting the Buddhist institution’s client-state relationship with Goguryeo, but his involvement as a commander—and, if the *New Tang History* is to be considered, a general-monk (*da jiang futu* 大將浮屠)—ensconced Sinseong squarely on the front lines of a multinational war. Perhaps Sinseong was acting upon compassion; if interpreted under the umbrella of “skill-in-means” (Skt. *upāya-kauśalya*; Ch. *fangbian* 方便), his phenomenal abilities as a thaumaturge would have ensured a swift conclusion to the conflict, curbing overall suffering and truncating the accumulation of negative karma for those involved. With this use of skill-in-means, Sinseong is killing a few to save the many. Concurrently, such a compassionate figure (often described as a bodhisattva in the *sūtras*) invites all accrual of negative karma upon himself.⁷⁸ Tied to this construct of compassion, it is equally likely Sinseong’s treason was founded upon a similar concern for religio-political expediency. By the Tang-Sillan siege of Pyongyang in 668, an overwhelmed Goguryeo had lapsed into a state of turmoil, leaving Sinseong to reassess his loyalties.

OPENING THE GATES OF PYONGYANG: WAS SINSEONG A TRAITOR OR A BUDDHIST LIBERATOR?

While the scarcity of records prevents any definitive revelation concerning Sinseong’s motives in colluding with the Tang, two underlying currents reverberating through Goguryeo’s political landscape—the denigration of Buddhism and a factional struggle in court—likely played significant roles. A considerable shift in religious interest from Buddhism to Daoism threatened the disenfranchisement of the Buddhist institution, while factionalism and power struggles proliferated in the void left by the death of Yeon Gaesomun (d. 666). In particular, Yeon Gaesomun’s death allowed for the resurgence of Buddhism in court and thus Sinseong’s presence among the Goguryean leadership. Buddhism’s fall from precedence and the state’s internal political strife provide a contextual foundation from which to evaluate Sinseong’s decision making in the fall of Pyongyang.

Collapse of the Client-State Relationship in Goguryeo

One possible element of Sinseong's collusion with the Tang was the gradual denigration of Buddhism in Goguryeo. The nearly three hundred years of economic support of Goguryean Buddhism waned as the elite's interest shifted to Daoism: King Yeongnyu requested Daoist texts from Tang Gaozu 唐高祖 (r. 618–626) in 624 and again from Taizong in 640, and King Bojang's embassy to Taizong in 643 proved particularly devastating for Buddhism.⁷⁹ Yeon Gaesomun persuaded the newly established figurehead that the cultivation of Daoism would solidify his claim to the throne. Resultantly, Bojang converted some Buddhist temples into Daoist institutions, ranked Daoists priests above Confucian scholars, and sent a mission to the Tang in 643 to request Daoist texts and priests.⁸⁰ The promotion of Daoism thus seems to have been tied to Yeon Gaesomun's political and military ascendancy rather than any strong conviction on the part of King Bojang.

This loss of patronage was disconcerting for the Buddhist clergy, who—in exchange for acting as educated advisors, thaumaturgic wonderworkers, and karmic regulators—depended upon imperial and noble economic support for their temples and monasteries.⁸¹ Reflecting this breakdown in client-patron relations, the eminent monk Bodeok 普德 departed for Baekje in 650 after King Bojang officially adopted Daoism. According to the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa* 三國遺事), Bodeok warned King Bojang that Goguryeo would forfeit the Buddha's protection if the king undermined the position of Buddhism in court.⁸² Bodeok attempted, apparently unsuccessfully, to espouse the Nirvāṇa doctrine (*Niepan shi* 涅槃師) among the Goguryean elite; he hoped the Nirvāṇa school, which stresses that buddha-nature exists within everyone, would counter the growing appeal of Daoist immortality. However, King Bojang was not swayed. The *History of the Three Kingdoms* records that a month after Bodeok departed, frost and hail destroyed the crops and the Goguryean people starved.⁸³

The monk Dohyeon 道顯 is similarly described as fleeing the corrupted Goguryean state to seek refuge in Japan under its Buddhist-venerating emperor. While the *Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon shoki* 日本書紀) gives no indication of when Dohyeon left Goguryeo, he had certainly expatriated to Japan by the time of the Tang-Goguryeo conflict: the first mention of Dohyeon that is not merely a citation from his *Record of the Reigns of Japan* (*Nihon seiki* 日本世紀), no longer extant, occurs in 662 during the reign of Emperor Tenji 天智天皇 (r. 661–672). At this time, the monk ostensibly divined the downfall of Goguryeo after witnessing a rat giving birth inside a horse's tail. Dohyeon is the last known Goguryean monk to travel to Japan; monks may have accompanied subsequent missions, such as the 662 emissary requesting Japanese support against Silla, but none are mentioned in the records.⁸⁴ Contemporaneously, this denigration of Buddhism would have posed a significant challenge to Sinseong's continued

means of influence. Considering the flights of Bodeok and Dohyeon in tandem with Sinseong's actions, it is tempting to argue the presence of a supranational Buddhist motive behind the latter's collusion with the Tang.

Contributing to a Pan-Asian Buddhist Realm

With Buddhism's loss of favor in court, Sinseong may have sought an alliance with the Tang in recognition of its comparatively flourishing Buddhist tradition. Granted, Buddhism had not enjoyed much imperial support at the beginning of the Tang dynasty. Tang Gaozu elevated Daoism over Buddhism and hailed Laozi as an ancient ancestor of the royal family. Taizong, although nominally supportive of Buddhism to avoid repercussions from his many Buddhist subjects, still enacted decrees to its disadvantage: an edict in 625 favored Daoist priests in ceremonies and another in 637 attacked Buddhism as a foreign religion. Gaozong, too, seemed to harbor little interest in Buddhism. He was nevertheless sensitive to curbing disputes between Daoists and Buddhists. He ordered, for instance, that all copies of the *Sūtra on Laozi's Conversion of the Barbarians* (*Laozi huahu jing* 老子化胡經), which painted the Buddha as a disciple of Laozi, be burned in 668.⁸⁵ While Gaozu, Taizong, and Gaozong may have been tepid in their benefaction, Gaozong's powerful wife, Wu Zhao, exhibited enthusiastic and sustained support for Buddhism. Her favored patronage, coupled with Gaozong's fear of conflict, led to the institution's reintroduction into the heart of Tang politics.

At the behest of Wu Zhao, a vegetarian banquet was held for five thousand monks in 656 in celebration of the newly appointed crown prince, Li Hong 李弘 (652–657). Gaozong and Wu Zhao continued Taizong's precedent of imperial support for the translation projects of Xuanzang; they agreed in 652 to construct a pagoda for the safekeeping of scriptures Xuanzang had transported from India. Wu Zhao later rebuilt the Big Goose Pagoda (*Dayan ta* 大雁塔), adding five stories, in 704.⁸⁶ Xuanzang maintained influence in other areas of court during Gaozong's reign: upon Wu Zhao's request, he became the godfather of Prince Li Xian 李顯, the future Emperor Zhongzong 唐中宗 (r. 684, 705–710); and he successfully petitioned for the removal of a 655 edict permitting monks to be tried by secular laws. Further, Gaozong and Wu Zhao made lavish donations to Famen Temple 法門寺, which housed the veritable finger bone of the Buddha, in 659.⁸⁷ Buddhism continued to enjoy a steady rise in influence as Wu Zhao gained more political leverage. As merely one example, Wu Zhao funded the carving of countless alcoves at Longmen 龍門 Grottoes, with Fengxian Temple 奉先寺 being her most grand contribution. The fifty-foot statue of Vairocana at this site may have even been carved in her image.⁸⁸ While Gaozong and Wu Zhao did not establish a Buddhist utopia on earth, their combined imperial patronage was certainly more impressive than King Bojang's record—and thus more appealing to Sinseong.

Indeed, loyalty to one's patron seems not to have been a prominent factor in monks' political decisions. By means of carefully constructed disciple-lineages, pilgrimages, doctrinal studies, and foreign diplomacy, Buddhist monks maintained an intricate network of cross-border communications. Thus, monks did not necessarily define themselves along separate national identities; they considered themselves part of certain traditions, lines of doctrinal transmission or monastic lineages grounded in the historical Buddha.⁸⁹ Greater than a sense of one's kingdom was a desire to achieve a universal transmission of the *Dharma*; monks were "joint collaborators" in a religious tradition that "transcended contemporary notions of nation and time."⁹⁰

The relationship between Sillan monk Uisang and Tang monk Fazang provides a critical example. As tensions increased between the Tang and Silla after the fall of Goguryeo and Baekje, Uisang left his doctrinal studies in China to warn King Munmu of Gaozong's intentions to attack Silla.⁹¹ This did not dissuade Uisang from maintaining a cordial relationship with Fazang, a monk deeply entrenched in the Tang court. Fazang sent his friend and fellow monk a list of his works, with the hope that the latter would propagate his teachings in Korea. The evangelical spread of the Flower Garland (Huayan 華嚴) tradition superseded any ties the two men maintained to their patron states, and strong tones of Buddhist universalism are vividly represented in correspondence between these two monks throughout the 690s.⁹²

While the Goguryean aristocracy's growing preference for Daoism in the seventh century increasingly displaced support for Buddhism, Sinseong clearly remained an influential presence in court; his military commandship implies that Buddhist monks' reputation as diplomats and thaumaturges endured to an extent. It is likely, then, that the denigration of Buddhism was not the only factor in Sinseong's collusion with the Tang. Sinseong's controversial treason is mired in a larger political upheaval that left factions scrambling for power and Goguryeo unable to resist the Tang-Silla insurgency. Perhaps Sinseong realized the practicality—whether for the sake of extending Buddhist universalism or simply for self-preservation—of aligning himself with the winning side.

Political Pragmatism

Despite the impression of Chinese dynastic histories, Sinseong's exploits were not an act of simple treason. The *History of the Three Kingdoms* implicates two lesser generals (*sojang* 小將), Yomyo 繆苗 and O Sa 烏紗, along with unnamed others, who participated alongside Sinseong in the coup. This wider conspiracy underscores a Goguryean court that was far from unified. Infighting spread rapidly after Yeon Gaesomun's death in 666 as members of the aristocracy and court rallied behind his three surviving sons. Yeon Gaesomun's eldest son, Namsaeng, became the next Grand Minister Plenipotentiary and proceeded to tour the outlying fortresses, leaving government matters in the hands of his

two younger siblings. However, ministers quickly pitted these brothers against one another. One minister warned Namgeon and Namsan that Namsaeng was plotting their removal, while another told Namsaeng that his two brothers were attempting to seize power in his absence. After the brothers captured a spy Namsaeng resultantly sent to Pyongyang in the eighth month of 666, Namgeon seized the title of Grand Minister Plenipotentiary. Namsaeng, stripped of his influence, sent his eldest son, Heonseong, to seek aid from the Tang.⁹³

Given Buddhism's systematic loss of influence to Daoism among the Goguryean elite, Sinseong likely sympathized with the faction led by the ousted Namsaeng, his treason a calculated coup from within. Members of the Namsaeng faction were indeed very supportive of Buddhism: Heonseong was the first to supervise the construction of the "Celestial Axis" (*tianshu* 天樞) in the nascent years of Wu Zhao's Zhou dynasty. The octagonal pillar, evocative of those constructed by the great Buddhist king Aśoka, elevated Wu Zhao to a position of prominence in a universal Buddhist realm that encompassed all countries and crossed all borders.⁹⁴ Additionally, that other generals were privy to Sinseong's plot suggests dissatisfaction had spread through the Namgeon-led faction. Just within the year of 668, Li Ji overcame the strategic Daehaeng fortress 大行城, defeated defensive forces encamped at the Yalu River palisade, and ransacked a series of surrendered territories as he advanced toward the capital. With increased trepidation, those within Pyongyang's walls learned that Li Ji had joined forces with another formidable general, Qibi Heli, to lay siege to the city.⁹⁵ With repeated Tang-Silla victories and the Goguryean capital city besieged, a pragmatic reevaluation of loyalties came into play.

In the midst of the siege, King Bojang sent forth Namsan with ninety-eight chieftains to present a white banner of surrender to Li Ji. At this time, only Namgeon remained in opposition. O Sa, Yomyo, and others, realizing that maintaining an alliance with Namgeon in such conditions was untenable and ill-advised, were more inclined to back Sinseong's plans to open the gate. Ultimately, their collusion with the Tang was rewarded: Namsan received the position of Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments (*sizai shaoqing* 司宰少卿) in the Tang bureaucratic structure, while Sinseong was made Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon.⁹⁶

The bestowal of Sinseong's title is the last mention of the treasonous monk in the historical records. The Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon was a nominal (*sanguan* 散館) title of the third rank, second class (*cong sanpin* 從三品) within the Tang hierarchy. While civil and military officers held substantive titles (*zhi shi guan* 職事官) designating active functions within the government, each official also received a nominal title (*ben pin* 本品) dictating their relative rank, ceremonial clothing, and salary.⁹⁷ Sinseong's nominal title reveals that the monk enjoyed a comfortable resettlement in the Tang, further emphasizing the extent to which Tang China and later Chinese historians overlooked his bad behaviors. The condemnation of Bud-

dhist monks' actions as good or evil depended a great deal upon these monks' expediency to the reigning political cause, rather than any assessment of faith or conduct.

The Chinese histories' reconfigured moral judgments of defected Goguryeans is reiterated in an epitaph of a particular Gao Raomia^o 高饒苗—likely the very same coconspirator, Go Yomyo. According to the epitaph, Gao Raomia^o (or Go Yomyo) received the honorific title of Revered Non-Han General (*jin mi di* 金日磾) and settled in the Korean expatriate community in Luoyang, where he served as the “eyes and ears” of the Chinese establishment among the non-Han peoples. After his death in the Xianheng 咸亨 reign era of Gaozong (674), Yomyo was buried to the south of Chang'an by imperial proclamation.⁹⁸ The epitaph alludes to a sizable Goguryean community in Luoyang, large enough for the Tang government to employ non-Han members like Yomyo—and perhaps our elusive monk Sinseong—to monitor its activities.

The growing popularity of Daoism among the Goguryean elite in the sixth and seventh centuries gradually displaced Buddhism from its former position of influence, leading eminent monks such as Dohyeon and Bodeok to flee the country. Yeon Gaesomun, an integral reason for Daoism's ascendancy, further complicated the Goguryean religio-political landscape with his coup in 642. Following his death in 666, Buddhism had an opportunity to reemerge, while factions in court vied for control over King Bojang by instigating animosity among the Yeon brothers. Goguryeo's domestic turmoil further played into the hands of the formidable Tang dynasty, which had been seeking a means of reinstating suzerainty over Korean territory. Sinseong is thus enmeshed in a web of religious shifts and maneuvers in power that complicate his seemingly indefensible treason.

SINSEONG IN CONTEXT

The stark difference in portrayals of Sinseong between Chinese sources and the *Joseon Meditation and Doctrine* is a poignant example of the various religio-political influences upon which damning labels were meted in early and medieval China. In Sinseong's case, none of the Chinese histories brand him as evil or villainous—labels often reserved for Buddhist monks. Unlike his marginalized Tang contemporary, Faya, Sinseong found himself on the victor's side and thus explicitly approved. Tang Gaozong handsomely rewarded him as an ally, and later Confucian literati treat Sinseong as a loyal subject of the Tang. Gim Busik also presents Sinseong favorably, as the fall of Goguryeo abetted the powers upon which the historian constructed Goryeo's cultural identity. In contrast, Bak Yeongseon depicts Sinseong as a contravener of Buddhist tenets and a disloyal servant of state—a condemnation reflecting contemporary neo-Confucian attacks on the Joseon Buddhist institution more than seven hundred years after the monk in question fatefully unbarred the gates of Pyongyang! Thus, what

encompassed “behaving badly” in medieval China—and even in the later Goryeo and Joseon—was based less on the subversion of religious and societal norms and more on where one stood in an ever-vacillating political landscape.

Within this precarious environment, Buddhist institutions nurtured relationships with the state, exchanging services of spiritual salvation and thaumaturgic protection for economic support and imperial favor. This delicate client-state relationship muddled moral waters; monks harnessed skill-in-means and other justifications to rationalize doctrinally incompatible positions as martial advisors, soldiers, and even generals with incredible responsibility in the defense of their patron kingdoms. Yet, the loyalties of individual monks were not as secure. Sinseong masterfully exploited his position to collude with the Tang army, though it is unclear whether he did so in the name of supranational Buddhist ideals or for simple self-preservation. He was but one jewel in an Indra’s net of Buddhist monks who fluidly maneuvered across porous religious, martial, and political boundaries, assuming multiple roles as they navigated the intricacies of *sangha*-state relations. Nevertheless, the artful maneuverings of this seditious general-monk set him apart from maligned Buddhist counterparts in early and medieval China; Sinseong remains a badly behaving monk who, in almost all historical accounts, is championed as a hero of the Tang.

NOTES

1. See Chen Jinhua, “The Statues and Monks of Shengshan Monastery”; *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*, 454–455; and “The Career of a ‘Villainous Monk.’” Additionally, the traditional founding dates of the Three Kingdoms states (Silla in 57 BCE, Goguryeo in 37 BCE, and Baekje 百濟 in 18 BCE) are debated in modern scholarship; Silla’s date may have been constructed in the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記) to bolster the legitimacy of its successor state, Goryeo 高麗 (918–1392). See Best, “Notes and Questions,” 125–134; Rodgers, “National Consciousness in Medieval Korea,” 151–172; Grayson, “Some Structural Patterns of the Royal Families of Ancient Korea,” 27–32; and Barnes, *State Formation in Korea*, 1–53.

2. Following Han Wudi’s 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE) conquest of northern and central Korea in 108 BCE, control over the Korean peninsula became a precedential measure of an emperor’s martial success and his dynasty’s overall greatness. Not until the fall of Pyongyang in 668, however, did China again reassert suzerainty over northern Korea: Sui Wendi 隋文帝 (r. 581–604) failed to retaliate against a Goguryean assault in 598; Sui Yangdi 隋煬帝 (r. 605–617) undertook three fruitless conquests against Goguryeo between 612 and 614; and Taizong likewise met little success in his campaigns between 644 and 649. Gaozong’s victory was thus particularly illustrious. For Han relations with early Korea, see Yi Ki back, *A New History of Korea*, 19–21. For Sui-Goguryean conflicts, see Wright, *The Sui Dynasty*, 190–197. On Taizong’s Korean campaigns, see Wechsler, “T’ai-tsung, the Consolidator,” 231–235; and Pan Yihong, *Son of Heaven and the Heavenly Qaghan*, 210–217. For Yeon Namsaeng’s request for Tang assistance, see Twitchett and Wechsler, “Kao-tsung and the Empress Wu,” 282–285; and Rothschild, “The Koguryan Connection,” 203–204.

3. R. W. L. Guisso speculates that Silla's enthusiastic adoption of Chinese traditions played a definitive role in the Tang's acceptance of this furthest and least populated Korean state as an ally. Silla replaced native ruling titles (*isageum* 尼斯今 and *maripgan* 麻立干) with the Chinese *wang* 王, adopted the Tang calendar system, and implemented Chinese reign era names. Guisso further notes that Silla restructured its central and provincial governments, tax system, corvée statutes, and court attire to parallel the Chinese model. Guisso, *Wu Tse-t'ien and the Politics of Legitimation in Tang China*, 114, 114nn42–43; and Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 41–43. Refer also to Gim Busik, *Samguk sagi*, scroll 4, fourth year of King Jijeung 智證王 (r. 500–503), and seventh year of King Beopheung 法興王 (r. 514–540).

4. His obscurity is further exacerbated by the near verbatim accounts provided in these available sources. This uniformity may be a result of historiographical traditions in China that spread to influence Korea and Japan. Beginning with the reorganization of the Bureau of Historiography in 629, court historians compiled dynastic histories under a progressively more standardized process that involved consolidating various official sources—the court diaries (*qiju zhu* 起居注), records of administrative affairs (*shizheng ji* 時政記), daily calendar (*rili* 日曆), veritable records (*shilu* 實錄), and the national histories (*guo shi* 國史). See Twitchett's *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*, especially part 2, “The Compilation of the Historical Record,” 33–190; and Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 489–491, 501–506.

5. For a more exegetical consideration of the following sources, refer to Kelly Carlton, “Textual and Epigraphic Sources on a ‘Traitor’ Monk and His Co-Conspirators in the Fall of Pyongyang (668 A.D.)” (paper presented at the International Conference on Stone Epigraphs and Buddhist Studies, Xi'an, Shaanxi, July 21–25, 2014).

6. See Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*, 454–455; and Chen, “The Statues and Monks of Shengshan Monastery,” 111–114, 154–160. For more on Xue Huaiyi's antics see Rothschild, this volume.

7. Unfortunately for Gaozong, Tang presence in Korea was short-lived. Preoccupied with more pressing matters, such as a formidable Tibetan threat in the west, the Tang was unable to quell revolts in the former Goguryean territory. Within a few years, Silla occupied nearly the entire Korean peninsula. Twitchett and Wechsler, “Kao-tsung and the Empress Wu,” 282–285. For more information on Unified Silla, see Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 66–91.

8. Li Ji was highly respected among early Tang rulers; Tang Gaozu 唐高祖 (r. 618–626) bestowed Li Ji, born as Xu Shiji 徐世勣, with the royal Li surname in 619. With the ascension of Taizong to the throne in 626, Li Shiji 李世勣 further altered his name to Li Ji 李勣 to avoid the taboo placed on characters of Taizong's personal name (Shimin 世民). Jonathan Karam Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*, 229–231. For a comprehensive biography of Li Ji, see Ning Zhixin, *Li Ji Pingzhuan*. For Qibi Heli, see Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*, 95–101.

9. Yeon Gaesomun placed King Bojang on the throne after leading a successful coup against King Yeongnyu 榮留王 (r. 618–642) in 642. Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 48.

10. Elder Brother of State (*taedaehyeong* 太대兄) was the second of twelve bureaucratic ranks in Goguryeo first implemented as part of King Sosurim's 小獸林 (r. 371–384) reorganization of the bureaucracy in 372. Lee Hyun-hee, Park Sung-soo, and Yoon Nae-hyun, *New History of Korea*, 231; and Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 51–52.

11. The *Zongzhang* 總章 reign era (668–670), named after a chamber in the Bright Hall (*mingtang* 明堂), was inaugurated to celebrate the completion of the hall's architectural blueprint. Kroll, "Basic Data on Reign-Dates and Local Government," 25–30; and Rothschild, "An Inquiry into Reign Era Changes under Wu Zhao," 144.

12. At the time of Gaozong's audience with the prisoners of war, Hanyuan Palace (*Hanyuan gong* 含元宮) was known as Penglai Palace 蓬萊宮. Initially named Yong'an Palace 永安宮 when first commissioned as a summer retreat for Tang Gaozu 唐高祖 (r. 618–626), it was renamed Daming Palace 大明宮 in 634. Although the project was abandoned following Gaozu's death, Gaozong resumed its construction in 662 under the name Penglai. It became known as Hanyuan in 670 and reprised its old name of Daming in 701. Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, 80–81.

13. King Bojang enjoyed little power during his reign, as Yeon Gaesomun assumed de facto leadership under the title of Grand Minister Plenipotentiary, controlling both diplomatic and martial affairs of state. Bojang was subsequently at the behest of Gaesomun's two sons, Namgeon and Namsan, who wrested the title of Grand Minister Plenipotentiary from Namsaeng in the wake of their father's death. Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 47–48, 66–67.

14. Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 454.5744, 476.6142.

15. Hucker does not provide an exact match in his *Dictionary of Official Titles* for Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments (*sizai shaoqing* 司宰少卿). "Court in Charge of Slaughtering" (*sizai si* 司宰寺) is an official variant of the Court of Imperial Entertainments from 662 to 671. *Shao qing* 少卿 denotes a vice minister title distinguishing second-tier executive officials from chief ministers (*qing* 卿). Ibid., 414.5091, 457.5785, 514.6809.

16. Qianzhou 黔州 was the seat of the Qianzhong circuit 黔中道, including parts of modern-day Guizhou, southeast Chongqing, west Hunan, southwest Hubei, and north Guangxi. Xiong, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval China*, 403.

17. In other words, Namsaeng was familiar with the local terrain and lent his knowledge to the Tang troops.

18. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 199.5327.

19. Wang Qinruo, *Cefu yuangui*, 19.211, 986.11579. For instance, while the *Models from the Archives* section on "Sovereigns and Princes" (*Di wang bu* 帝王部) mirrors the *Old Tang History* in its use of "troop unit supervisor" (*zhuobing zongguan* 捉兵總管), the section on "Outer Offices" (*Wai dian* 外典) denotes Sinseong as a unit supervisor responsible for the preparation of local (*dang di* 當地), rather than foreign (*kebing* 客兵), troops (*zhubing zongguan* 主兵總管). Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 531.7110; "捉兵," *zdic.net* (2013): www.zdic.net/c/9/8A/150845.htm; and "主兵," *zdic.net* (2013): <http://www.zdic.net/c/b/4/8773.htm>.

20. Wang Qinruo, *Cefu yuangui*, 128.1532.

21. The *New Tang History* states that one hundred men carried a banner of surrender to Li Ji, while the *Old Tang History* claims ninety-eight. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 199.5327.

22. The *Old Tang History*, in contrast, states 697,000 households. Liu Xu further notes that the region was separated into nine military-provinces, forty-two prefectures, and one hundred counties. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 199.5327.

23. Zhaoling 昭陵 is the imperial mausoleum necropolis of Gaozong's father, Tang Taizong. By presenting King Bojang to Taizong's tomb, Gaozong hoped to bolster his valid-

ity both within his kingdom and in the eyes of his deceased father. For more on imperial tombs in Tang China and their use to express political legitimacy, see Tonia Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China, 618–907*, especially 1–28.

24. The *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑) indicates that this was a supernumerary (*yuanwai* 員外) position. As Hucker states, during the Tang “such appointees received half the standard stipend of a regular [*zheng* 正] appointee.” Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 201.6356–6357; and Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 597.8250.

25. “Beyond the passes” (*ling wai* 嶺外) indicates the Five Passes (*wu ling* 五嶺) in modern-day Hunan, Guangxi, and Guandong, through which one entered the southernmost reaches of the Tang empire (i.e., Lingnan 嶺南), encompassing modern-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and northern Vietnam. Xiong, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval China*, 316; and Kroll, *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, 276.

26. Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 485.6258.

27. Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6197.

28. *Samguk sagi*, scroll 44, biography of Geo Chil-bu; and Jorgensen, “Goguryeo Buddhism,” 66.

29. Broy, “Martial Monks in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” 71–73.

30. The text originally states that the city burned for four months (*fen cheng si yue* 焚城四月). The commentator, Hu Sanxing, notes this as a transcription error, asserting that “month” (*yue* 月) should be “corner” (*jiao* 角). Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 201.6356–6357.

31. Ibid.

32. Similar to having Bojang submit to Taizong at Zhaoling, Gaozong further showcased his filial piety by presenting results of the successful campaign at the imperial ancestral temple.

33. Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 201.6356–6357.

34. This seems more likely, as Buyeo Pung was among those captured in Goguryeo. Wang Zhenping, *Tang China in Multi-polar Asia*, 77–82.

35. Disparities between the *New Tang History* and the *General Study of Literary Remains* only arise due to Ma Duanlin's summarization or removal of information. For instance, Ma Duanlin does not mention the Tang troops' burning of Pyongyang to its four corners (鬱焰四興). He condenses the list of those rewarded into a much shorter statement, omitting Heonseong and Sinseong: “Namsaeng and other officials—Heli, Ji, and Rengui—were all rewarded” (男生等官何力績仁貴各加). Yuan Shu, *Tongjian jishi benmo*, 29.2658–2659; Ma Duanlin, *Wenxian tongkao*, 325.2558.

36. However, Gim Busik was not necessarily opposed to Buddhism. He wrote epitaphs for deceased monks and even describes how Gim Yusin 金庾信 (595–673)—a semimythical Confucian figure in his Silla-based founding theory of Goryeo—prayed at Buddhist monasteries and received aid from bodhisattvas. McBride, “Hidden Agendas in the Life Writings of Kim Yusin,” 102–103, 110–113, 122–129. See also *Samguk sagi*, scroll 42, biography of Gim Yusin.

37. In fact, as Remco E. Breuker notes, the writings of Gim Busik are not clear on whether Myocheong was even a Buddhist monk. Breuker, “Landscape Out of Time,” 76–89, especially 79n34, and 100–101. See also Xu, “That Glorious Ancient History of Our Nation,” 71–149.

38. For more on Gim Busik's construction of Goryeo identity, see Rogers, “National Consciousness in Medieval Korea,” 151–172; McBride, “Hidden Agendas in the Life Writings of Kim Yusin,” 101–142; and Breuker, “Landscape Out of Time,” 69–106.

39. Gim Busik offers the same description of Sinseong's martial position in Goguryeo as Sima Guang, only differing in the use of *futu* 浮圖, rather than *seng* 僧, to note Sinseong's monastic ordination. *Zizhi tongjian*, 201.6356–6357.

40. *Samguk sagi*, scroll 22, twenty-seventh year of King Bojang.

41. A precise dating of the *Study of Joseon Meditation and Doctrine* remains problematic. The colophon offers little help in narrowing the time frame, as the place of publication, Han-yang 漢陽, was declared the capital in conjunction with the inauguration of the Joseon. Further, the content of the text concludes with the reigns of Song Taizu 宋太祖 (r. 960–976) and Goryeo Emperor Gwangjong 光宗 (r. 949–975). However, a clue lies in the title's particular "Meditation and Doctrine" (*seon-gyo* 禪教) designation, which is a product of King Sejong's 世宗 (r. 1418–1450) forceful compression of seven Buddhist orders to two in 1424: *seon* 禪 (Ch. *chan*; "Meditation") and *gyo* 教 (Ch. *jiao*; "Doctrine"). As the *seon-gyo* orders were temporarily annulled in 1501 by King Yeonsangun 燕山君 (r. 1494–1506), again abolished by King Jungjong 中宗 (r. 1506–1544), and only briefly reinstated in 1550–1566, Bak Yeongseon most likely wrote his treatise sometime between 1424 and 1501. Bak Yeongseon, *Joseon seon-gyo go*, in (*Wan*) *Xu zang jing* (hereafter *X*; followed by the volume, text number, and if applicable, page number, register, and line) 87, no. 1622; Kwon Kee-Jong, "Buddhism Undergoes Hardships," 171–174; Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 162–165.

42. Pyongan province was one of eight provinces established during the Joseon dynasty. Bak Yeongseon, *Joseon seon-gyo go*, *X*, 87, no. 1622, 221a05–221a06.

43. *Ibid.*, 220c05, 220c20, and 221b21–22.

44. See Suh Yoon-kil, "The History and Culture of Buddhism in the Koryŏ Dynasty," 75–116; and Sem Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas*.

45. Kwon Kee-Jong, "Buddhism Undergoes Hardships," 170–181.

46. Breuker, "Landscape Out of Time," 89–91. For more on the Myocheong Rebellion, see Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 407–446; and Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 137–138.

47. Gihwa, *Hyeonjeong non*, 7.217a–225b. For an English translation, see Jinwol Lee and Yongho Ch'oe, "Treatise on Manifesting Rightness," 384–387.

48. As John Jorgensen's survey of Goguryean Buddhism concludes, no stele inscriptions for seventh-century Goguryean monks survive, nor are there any indications of large Buddhist statuary or intricate grottoes similar to those in China, Baekje, or Silla. Further, Jorgensen notes that only one monk from Goguryeo is mentioned in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Tang* (*Tang gaoseng zhuan* 唐高僧傳). Jorgensen, "Goguryeo Buddhism," 100. See also Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, 34–37; and Kim Young-tae, "Buddhism in the Three Kingdoms," 35–74.

49. Kim, "Buddhism in the Three Kingdoms," 44.

50. Lee Bongjoon, "Introduction," 32–33.

51. Chen, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, 168–169; McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 27–32. As a further note, one must be cautious of wholly equating state-sponsored Buddhist institutions in China, Korea, and Japan with nation protection. For a deconstruction of the term "Nation Protection Buddhism" in the Korean context, to which it is most often applied, see Jong Myung Kim, "Chajang and 'Buddhism as National Protector,'" 23–55.

52. For more on *dhāraṇī*, see Copp, "Dhāraṇī Scriptures," 176–180; as well as his longer study, "Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone." For a comparison to Daoist incantations, see Mollier, "In Pursuit of the Sorcerers," 55–99.

53. Charles D. Orzech dates the *Transcendent Wisdom Scripture for Humane Kings* to the fifth century, sometime after 477. There is also an eighth-century recension of the text, “retranslated” during the Tang. There are three renditions of the *Scripture of Golden Light* in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter *T*; followed by the volume, text number, and if applicable, page number, register, and line): from the Northern Liang (*T*, 16, no. 663), Sui (*T*, 16, no. 664), and Tang (*T*, 16, no. 665). For the dating of the fifth century *Transcendent Wisdom*, see Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 119–121. For these scriptures’ relation to early esoteric Korean Buddhism, see Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in Korea,” 61–78.

54. Peter H. Lee, however, argues that these nation-protecting practices were less popular in Goguryeo and Baekje than in Silla. Silla established three monasteries for the protection of the state: Hwangnyong 皇龍寺, Sacheonwang 四天王寺, and Gameun 感恩寺. In particular, Hwangnyong Monastery was the designated site for the imperially sanctioned Convocation for the Recitation of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks. Lee, *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 35; and McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 28–29.

55. For more information on King Prasenajit of Kośala, see Buswell and Lopez, “Prasenajit,” 664; and Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, 88–95.

56. The fourfold assembly refers to monks (*bhikṣu*), nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*), male lay devotees (*upāsaka*), and female lay devotees (*upāsikā*). See Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 85–91, 107–110.

57. In addition to monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees, the sevenfold assembly consists of novice monks (*śrāmaṇera*), novice nuns (*śrāmaṇerikā*), and female probationers (*śikṣamāṇā*). For more information on *śikṣamāṇās*, see Heirman, “Remarks on the Rise of the *bhikṣuṇīsaṃgha*,” 43–57.

58. Literally, the “lion’s roar” (Skt. *simhanāda*; Ch. *shizi hou* 師子吼), a metaphor describing the Buddha’s “authoritative and powerful” teachings. Soothill and Hodous, “師子吼,” 780.

59. The three garments (Skt. *kāṣāya*; Ch. *jiasha* 袈裟) comprising monastic dress, including an assembly robe, upper garment, and undergarment. Soothill and Hodous, “三衣,” 159.

60. This fifth-century rendition is traditionally ascribed to Kumārajīva (350–409), although Orzech argues it was written circa 470–490. Kumārajīva, *Foshuo renwang banruoboluomi jing*, *T*, 8, no. 245, 829c29–830a09. For the eighth-century version of this excerpt, see Bukong, *Renwang huguo banruoboluomi duo jing*, *T*, 8, no. 246, 840a10–20. Refer to Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 281–282 for a consideration of the differences between the two renditions.

61. Chen Jinhua, “The Career of a ‘Villainous Monk,’” 320–325.

62. McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 70–72.

63. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 15–17.

64. Guo told the ruler, Shi Le 石勒 (274–333), that Fotudeng was a powerful *śramaṇa* who had come to instruct Shi Le in the ways of a *cakravartin* (*lun wang* 輪王), or “wheel-turning” king. Wright, “Fo-t’u-têng: A Biography,” 322–327, 338–340.

65. For example, Murong De 慕容德 (r. 398–405) of the Southern Yan 南燕 (398–410) employed the monk Zhu Senglang 竺僧朗 (ca. 315–400) to predict the outcome of battles. Jorgensen, “Goguryeo Buddhism,” 99. This thaumaturgic emphasis persisted in Goguryean Buddhism. Minister Wang Godeok 王高德, who sent the monk Uiyeon 義淵 to the Northern

Qi (550–577) for information on Buddhism’s origins, was particularly curious about the powers of eminent monks such as Nāgārjuna. Gakhun, *Haedong goseung jeon*, T., 50, no. 2065, 1016b16–c28; Kim Tong-hwa, “The Buddhist Thought in Koguryō,” 83–84; and Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, 1–4, 30–36.

66. James H. Grayson argues that—at least in Silla—esoteric Buddhism became the “superior form of shamanism.” Grayson, *Korea—A Religious History*, 48. See also Grayson, “The Accommodation of Korean Folk Religion,” 199–217.

67. Ilyeon, *Samguk yusa*, 98–100.

68. See the biographies of Dao’an and Kumārajīva in the *Liang Gaoseng zhuan* 梁高僧傳, T., 50, no. 2059, 351c03 and 330a10, respectively. Dharmakṣema’s disciple, Daojin 道進 (d. 444), likewise prophesized that the son of Northern Liang (397–440) ruler, Juqu Mengxun 沮渠蒙遜 (r. 401–433), would seize Gaochang 高昌. For more information on Daojin, see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 28–30.

69. Broy, “Martial Monks in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” 65–73, including further examples of monks engaged in warfare on behalf of Chinese rulers.

70. Shahrar, *The Shaolin Monastery*, 22–37; and “Epigraphy, Buddhist Historiography, and Fighting Monks,” 15–36.

71. Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 60.

72. Grayson, *Korea—A Religious History*, 38–39. See also Yi Ki baek, 59–61; Lee, “The Hwarang,” in *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, 100–101; and *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, 74–82.

73. Adolphson, *The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha*, 46–51, 117–147.

74. See Chapter 12, this volume, on Zhishi’s staunch remonstrance against Faya’s recruitment of monk-soldiers.

75. However, there is an understanding that the Buddha considered armed force permissible for the protection of the *Dharma* if monks and nuns were not directly involved. This allowance mainly pertained to rulers; the legendary warrior king Aśoka was a historical precedent of the *cakravartin*, who defended the Three Jewels (*sanbao* 三寶) with force when necessary. For more on justifications of warfare for Buddhist kings, see Schmithausen, “Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude Towards War.”

76. Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 85–91; Shundō Tachibana, *The Ethics of Buddhism*, 57–87; and Davids and Oldenberg, *The Vinaya Texts*, 43.

77. As Tansen Sen states, Taizong desired to “secure spiritual support for his temporal quest.” Cloaking his refusal in the guise of lacking any abilities to help in the campaign, Xuanzang added that the *Vinaya* prohibited him from visiting battlefields. Tansen Sen, “In Search of Longevity and Good Karma,” 11; Huili, *The Life of Xuanzang*, 213; for the original text, see Huili, *Xuanzang quan zhuan*, T., 50, no. 2053, 253b21–c01. See also, Wright, “T’ang T’ai-tsung and Buddhism,” 239–263; and Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang*, 11–27.

78. In fact, skill-in-means is the seventh of ten perfections a bodhisattva must cultivate, correlating with the ten stages (*bhūmi*) of the bodhisattva path. As Paul Williams muses, “In terms of philosophical ethics, one wonders if there are *any* acts a Buddha or advanced Bodhisattva might not (in theory) do, if compassionate motivation and action in context demanded it.” Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 151–154, especially 151n13; Demiéville, “Buddhism and War,” 38–45; and Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 226–231.

79. *Samguk sagi*, scroll 20, seventh and twenty-third years of King Yeongnyu. For more on textual and ideological rivalries between Buddhism and Daoism during the sixth and

seventh centuries, see Barrett, *From Religious Ideology to Political Expediency in Early Printing*, as well as Mollier's aforementioned study *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*.

80. *Samguk sagi*, scroll 21, second year of King Bojang; *Samguk yusa*, 193–194. Yeon Gaesomun convinced King Bojang to favor Daoism by evoking the powerful political image of a bronze tripod (Ch. *ding*; Kr. *jeong* 鼎), in which Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism represented the three legs of state. According to Yeon Gaesomun, the leg of Daoism required strengthening to stabilize the Goguryean kingdom. For more on bronze tripods in governmental discourse, see Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual*, 57–64, 95–101.

81. As Jacques Gernet aptly states in his description of a similar dynamic in neighboring Tang China, “monks themselves were a luxury,” their services rendered in return for lavishly patronized temples and monks’ continued prestige in court. Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 195–197.

82. *Samguk yusa*, 193–194.

83. *Samguk sagi*, scroll 22, ninth year of King Bojang; Grayson, *Korea—A Religious History*, 36–37; Yi Ki baek, *A New History of Korea*, 61. The *Samguk yusa* further records that Bodeok fled by calling upon a wind to carry his disciples and the entire Banyong Temple 盤龍寺 to Mt. Godae. Upon visiting Banyong Temple, Uicheon 義天 (1055–1101), the State Preceptor (*guksa* 國師) of Goryeo, composed a poem lamenting that King Bojang was “forsaken by the Buddha” when he chose to follow the “yellow-caps and fairymen” (i.e., Daoists). *Samguk yusa*, 193–198.

84. Jorgensen, “Goguryeo Buddhism,” 67–68; Grayson, *Korea—A Religious History*, 36; *Nihon shoki* scroll 27, first year of Emperor Tenji.

85. Wright, “T’ang T’ai-tsung and Buddhism,” 239–263; Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang*, 5–37.

86. Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang*, 27–38; Weinstein, “Imperial Patronage in T’ang Buddhism,” 291–299.

87. Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang*, 27–39.

88. Rothschild, *Wu Zhao*, 139–150. See also Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang*, 37–47, and Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 146–148.

89. Buswell, “Patterns of Influence in East Asian Buddhism,” 8–10.

90. Buswell, “Imagining ‘Korean Buddhism,’” 73–107. Nevertheless, these lineage distinctions in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* may be more representative of Song taxonomy than monks’ identity formations during the seventh century.

91. *Samguk yusa*, 98.

92. See Forte, *A Jewel in Indra’s Net*.

93. *Samguk sagi*, scroll 22, twenty-fifth year of King Bojang. This episode is also recorded in the *Chronicles of Japan*, scroll 27, sixth year of Emperor Tenji.

94. Antonino Forte coins this brand of Buddhist ideology as “international Buddhism.” See Forte, *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock*, 229–252; and Chen Jinhua, “Śāriṃ and Scepter,” 77–80. For more on Heonseong’s career in the Tang court, see Rothschild, “The Koguryan Connection,” 210–223.

95. Li Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 199.5327; Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6197; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 201.6356–6357; and Gim Busik, *Samguk sagi*, scroll 22, twenty-seventh year of King Bojang.

96. Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6197; Ma Duanlin, *Wenxian tongkao*, 325.2558; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 201.6356–6357; and Yuan Shu, *Tongjian jishi benmo*, 29.2658–2659.

97. The controversial Huifan also received this position sometime between June 15, 706, and February 6, 707, soon after a previous promotion from Duke of Shangyong 上庸 to abbot of the newly constructed Shengshan Monastery 聖善寺. Several members of both Bodhiruci's 菩提留支 (d. 727) *Ratnakūṭa* translation office and Yijing's 義淨 (635–713) translation office likewise held the title. See Chen Jinhua, *Philosopher, Practitioner, and Politician*, 406–412, 431–433, 455; and Cen Zhongmian, “The T’ang System of Bureaucratic Titles and Grades,” 25–31.

98. Zhang Yan, “Tang gaoli yimin,” 46–49. The Tang similarly resettled the Gaochang 高昌 (Turfan) ruling family in Luoyang after Taizong’s conquest in 642. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, 117–119.

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